

PT  
2026  
G4  
1837

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. PT 2026

Shelf GA

1837

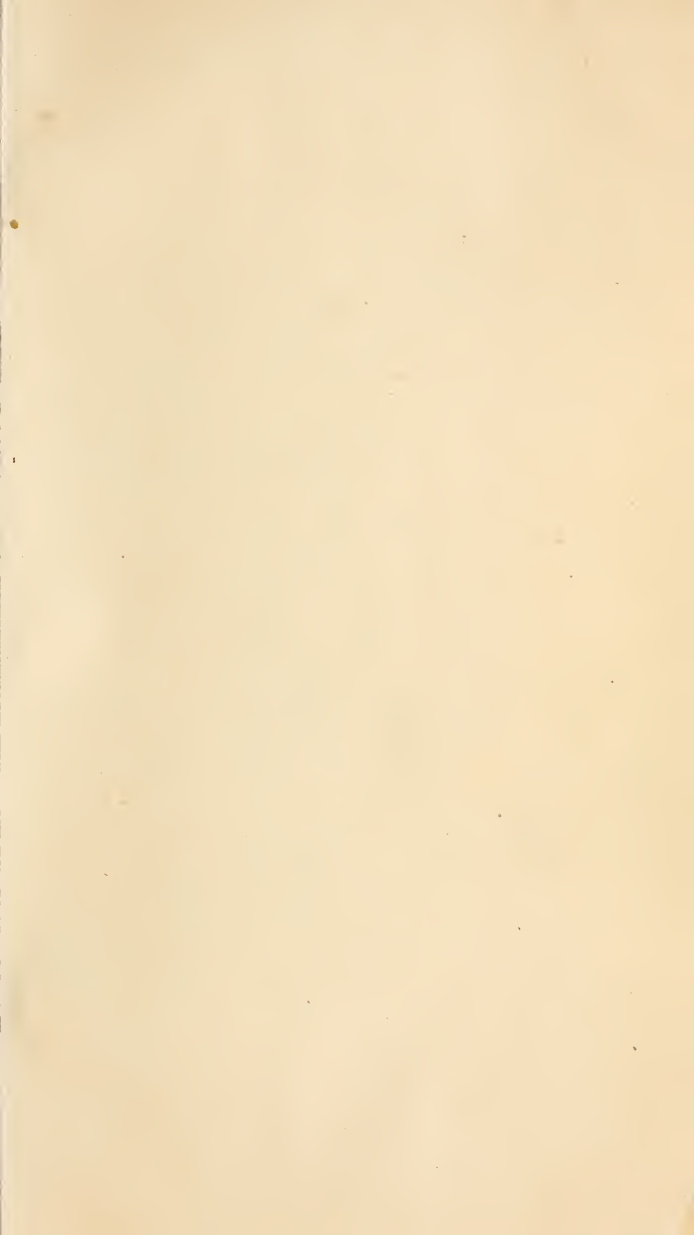
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





















# GOETZ VON BERLICHINGEN

.WITH

THE IRON HAND.

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS.

FROM THE GERMAN

OF

*Goethe's Wolfgang von*  
GOETHE.

---

Das Unglück ist geschehn—das Herz des Volks ist in den  
Koth getreten, und keiner edeln Begierde mehr fähig!

USONG.

---

PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY, LEA & BLANCHARD.

1837.



PT 2026

G4  
1837

ENTERED according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1837, by  
CAREY, LEA & BLANCHARD, in the Clerk's Office of the Eastern District  
of Pennsylvania.

3113

LC Control Number



tmp96 031596

E. G. DORSEY, PRINTER,  
LIBRARY STREET.



## P R E F A C E .

---

THE first publication by which Göthe attracted general attention, was his drama of *Götz von Berlichingen with the Iron Hand*. It appeared in 1773, and having had considerable success, was soon followed by the well known *Sorrows of Werther*.

The scenes of this Drama are laid in different parts of Germany a short time before the death of the Emperor Maximilian I. and some years after the promulgation of the famous Edict of the Diet at Worms, which took away from the Barons of the Empire the right which they had before possessed of making private wars upon each other. This right had early given rise to a regular system of freebooting. A large proportion of the knights and lesser barons were too poor to keep up their feudal state, without predatory incursions into the domains of their richer neighbours; and in order to accomplish

this with impunity, they formed leagues among themselves,—which were ostensibly for the purpose of mutual assistance in their private wars, but which were in fact nothing else than agreements to plunder in company and divide the spoil. The possessions of the wealthy nobles, the endowments of the clergy, and the commerce of the free towns, then rapidly extending itself, offered a tempting prey to these needy marauders; whose boldness and rapacity, as their numbers increased, rose to such a pitch that they could only be held in check by a defensive league between the ecclesiastic and secular Princes of the Empire, and the higher Nobility, with whom were associated some of the knights and lesser barons who had good estates, and who consequently required protection against their own order. The constant struggle between these contending parties filled the whole country with violence and bloodshed. The authority of the Emperors had long been a mere shadow—there was no civil power to protect the weak—the sword was the only efficient arbiter of disputes, and by the sword they were always determined. In such a state of things, as may be supposed, the condition of the Peasantry was miserable in the extreme. Their rights, if indeed they could

be said to have any, were not regarded—they suffered on all sides, and were plundered and murdered indiscriminately by the licentious soldiery of both parties. The atrocious cruelties which they were thus compelled to endure, often excited them to open rebellion; but as the nobles generally made common cause against them, and as their movements were ill contrived and without sufficient concert, they were easily overpowered, and their natural efforts to protect themselves from outrage, visited with the severest punishment.

There were, however, a few of the nobles who kept aloof from all leagues; who, being strong enough to defend their own castles and possessions, would not unite themselves with any association which required them to relinquish their individual independence, or acknowledge another superior beside the Emperor. They therefore made enemies of both parties. The higher nobility considered their independence a mere pretence to conceal their connexion with the freebooting barons; while these, on the other hand, viewed their opposition to their League as an open declaration of hostility, and assaulted and pillaged them whenever an opportunity presented itself.

To put an end to this scene of anarchy and rapine,

the Edict of Maximilian I. was framed and issued from the Diet held at Worms in 1495—all the princes, prelates, and barons who were present at that Diet swearing solemnly to enforce with the whole of their power the penalty of the Edict against those who should be daring enough to violate its provisions. This penalty was no less than the Ban of the Empire,—which at once excommunicated and outlawed the offender, making him a public enemy, and setting a price upon his head. The free towns, the clergy and the wealthy nobles had of course good reason to uphold this measure; but the League of the knights and lesser barons, whose existence depended upon their right to make private war, determined, dangerous as it might be, not to yield up that right without a struggle. The few independent barons who have been mentioned, although they were connected with neither party at the time the Edict was published, nevertheless viewed the abrogation of an ancient privilege at the instance of the higher nobility with the utmost jealousy and discontent. They suspected that the Edict was aimed quite as much at their own importance and independence, as at the violent practices of their marauding brethren;—to whom under this impression they at last united them-

selves in what they believed to be a just contest for their "unalienable rights."

These independent barons were an important accession to the malecontents;—for without being of high rank, some of them possessed great influence, and even enjoyed the personal favour of the Emperor himself, who, notwithstanding their open opposition to his authority, discriminated them from the rest of their party, and in one or two instances interfered to shield them from the consequences of their own disobedience. It therefore became a difficult matter to enforce submission to the Edict, as had been solemnly determined upon; the resistance in all quarters was obstinate and well conducted, and the country continued to be as much agitated as ever. At the first the Imperial forces co-operated zealously with those of the Princes and the higher Nobility whenever occasion required; but the designs of Louis XII. of France upon the Dutchy of Milan, and the repeated irruptions of the Turks into Maximilian's hereditary dominions, before long occupied him so seriously, that he was obliged to leave the internal peace of the Empire entirely to the care of those who were most interested in the preservation of it. The Princes and their allies being thus thrown upon their own



resources, returned naturally to their original league for mutual defence; but having now the authority of an Imperial Edict for their measures, backed by the formidable penalty of the Ban of the Empire, they pursued them with greater energy than before, and with greater success. The state of things was gradually ameliorated—other causes assisted to produce a favourable change, and at the time which Göthe has chosen for the scenes of his Drama, it would appear, that but few of the factious knights and barons of any note were left, who ventured to exercise the forbidden right of making private war, besides the hero of it, Götz von Berlichingen, and some of his immediate friends and associates. He in fact flourished at a later period than this; though he was always, as Göthe represents him, a fearless and honest champion for the privileges of his order. His protection of the Peasantry around him, and the unbounded popularity which he enjoyed among them, as well as his frequent acts of violence, had made him peculiarly obnoxious to the princes and nobles who still remained confederated for the purpose of enforcing Maximilian's Edict; but he was powerfully connected, and his friends openly countenanced and defended him in the different Diets, so that all efforts

to procure his overthrow proved unsuccessful, until his own rashness in implicating himself in a sanguinary and dangerous revolt of the peasantry of Suabia and Franconia in 1525, (generally known by the name of the *Peasants' War*) furnished his enemies with the means of partially accomplishing their designs. He was imprisoned for a considerable time, and afterwards released, though in the Drama he is represented as dying in prison. Its incidents are principally confined to the various intrigues set on foot against him, and with some exceptions are of a very simple character.

In 1799, the late Sir Walter Scott published a translation of this Drama of Göthe, which has lately been republished in a new edition of his poetical works.\* Those of his biographers who have spoken of this translation, seem disposed to admit that it was executed with too much haste, and even without a sufficient knowledge of the German itself, which they say he had studied but a very short time. One among them, however, after a long dissertation upon the general character of Göthe's writings, fol-

\* The poetical works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart. vol. xii. Edinburgh, 1834.

lowed by a critical analysis of the Drama of *Götz von Berlichingen*, comes roundly to the conclusion that Scott overlooked its peculiar beauties and “delicate traits of character to a degree absolutely ludicrous,” and “with a crude unripened taste for fantastic horrors,” perceived only “its secondary merits.” This is strong language to apply even to a juvenile effort of the author of *Waverly*; but as this writer’s observations upon the original Drama will presently be compared with Göthe’s own account of it, his opinion of the translation may be left without comment.

Like other men of great genius who have given their thoughts to the world, Göthe has been pursued by a host of indiscriminate admirers and copious commentators, who have exerted their fancies to point out beauties in every line, and tortured the sense to discover a meaning where, perhaps, the Poet intended none. Dante was scarcely in his grave before the citizens of Florence (who had both persecuted and banished him) determined to establish a public professorship, for the purpose of expounding and illustrating his “divine poem,” the obscurity of which had already made it a fruitful source of controversy. No less a person than Boccaccio was

chosen to occupy the chair of this new professorship, and he devoted himself with so much ardour to “the flattering task” as completely to undermine his health—death interrupting his labours before he had proceeded more than half way through the *Inferno*. His comments, however, were carefully collected,\* and served as a rare addition of materials for the lucubrations of after commentators, who have not failed to avail themselves of them. About the same time Pietro, the eldest son of Dante himself, was occupied with the same subject, and before long produced his commentary on his father’s poem,† which, considering the opportunity he may be supposed to have had of access to the original manuscripts, should assuredly have shed more light upon his father’s meaning. These were but the pioneers. On the revival of letters, after the invention of the art of printing, the mysteries of Dante became a favourite subject with writers of all classes and pretensions, who emulated each other in the extent and subtilty of their disqui-

\* Under the title of *Chiose del Boccaccio sopra alcuni luoghi di Dante*.

† Comento inedito, che ha per titolo—*Petri Dantis Aligherii, Florentini clarissimi Legum Doctoris Commentarium in divinum Opus genetoris sui Dantis*.

sitions. Their example has been eagerly followed in more modern times, and we have now before us the annotations and theories of Lombardi, Venturi, Bottari, Abeken, Uhde, Gozzi, Rosetti, Biagioli, and a multitude of others of inferior name—all affecting to disclose beauties and unravel difficulties overlooked by their predecessors. The result of these preposterous labours may be well illustrated by the contemporary declarations of two eminent men, themselves commentators upon Dante, one of whom rather boldly asserts—“In the study of Dante I have perceived little need of any commentary whatever; for the passages which are said to be the most unintelligible, and concerning which there has been the most dispute, appear to me to have no other obscurity than that which is inseparable from a Poem written several centuries since, designed for a particular purpose, and every where filled with local allusions”—while the other\* mournfully confesses—“I discover in Dante an immense mystery, of which, alas, I fear that I shall never obtain the key!”

The commentators of Göthe have pursued the same course with regard to his writings, and with nearly the same success. Upon the appearance of *Die*

\* Gravina.



*Wahlverwandschaften* and *Wilhelm Meister*, they regularly commenced their critical illustrations, which with persevering industry they have continued to the present time. It is true that their author has not failed to supply them with new subjects for conjecture and disputation—like Dante, he deals in ineffable mysteries, and like him too, with the aid of his zealous commentators, he has been enveloped in majestic and impenetrable obscurity. The majority of the German critics are of opinion that the lustre of all Göthe's other efforts is eclipsed by the transcendent merits of his *Faust*. They call it a profound philosophic poem,\* of the grandest character, which must long remain unrivalled, being the production of a man of wonderful genius, in the very department for which he seemed born. And yet no two of these critics can agree upon the meaning of any one of its scenes, and the question as to the real design of the work, has excited a discussion among them, which still divides their world of letters, and even embitters it with personal animosities. A. W. Schlegel attempted to compose the difficulty by main-

\* In Miss Austin's *Characteristics of Göthe*, *Faust* is called "a philosophico-religious didactic drama."

taining that *Faust* was but a fragment, and that any judgment with regard to its bearing and purpose, before the author had entirely completed it, must necessarily be premature. But now that the world has been presented with the long expected second part of "the eternal *Faust*," a new and even more knotty question has been started to bewilder the unlearned admirers of German literature; and a strong array of argument is produced to prove that the second part of *Faust* is not a continuation of the first—but in fact another Poem, of a different character, and with a different aim—having nothing in common with its predecessor but "the memorable name!" And who is to decide the matter, or guide the perplexed inquirer "upon an ocean of discussion so truly dark, and at the same time so illimitable?"

*Götz von Berlichingen*, as already stated, was Göthe's first publication, and written long before he commenced this poetic mysticism.\* The comparative

\* Göthe informs us in his Memoirs, that the idea of the first part of *Faust* was conceived at the same time with that of *Götz von Berlichingen*; but it was not written or published until long afterwards. The second part of *Faust* was finished in the summer of 1831, only a few months (or according to some, a few weeks) before his death.

simplicity of its construction and style could therefore yield his commentators little occasion for their customary dissertations upon the hidden meaning of particular passages. But as they seem to think it impossible that Göthe should have written any thing with the mere object of exhibiting human character and human feeling, they have accordingly attempted to raise this Drama to their favourite philosophic level by a great deal of declamation as to the extraordinary nature of its general merits, which some of them would certainly place before those of any dramatic production, either of ancient or of modern times. A brief extract shall be made from two of the most moderate of these writers, for the purpose of comparing their observations with Göthe's own account of his Drama (before alluded to) taken from his curious *Memoirs* of his own life, in which, as far as he goes, he speaks of himself and his writings with remarkable sincerity. The first extract is from the well known *Dramatic Lectures* of A. W. Schlegel:

“Göthe in his *Götz von Berlichingen* entered his protest against the arbitrary rules by which the Drama had hitherto been fettered. It was not written in imitation of Shakspeare, but rather in that

generous emulation which may be excited in a man of genius on reading the works of a kindred spirit. In the dialogue he even went beyond Lessing's ideas of natural freedom, and violated received opinions more than any one had ventured to do before him. He made use of no poetical circumlocution whatever—the exhibition was to be the very thing itself, and he brought before us the tone of a remote age in a manner carrying with it a wonderful degree of illusion. The situations of the Drama portrayed with a few master strokes are irresistibly powerful—he has painted in moving colours the true, old German simplicity—he conveys a great historical meaning, and exhibits the struggle of a century about to pass away, with a century about to begin.”\*

The next extract is from the author whose opinion of Sir Walter Scott's translation of *Götz von Berlichingen* has already been quoted:

“Götz von Berlichingen (is) the central figure (of the Drama) the point to which all other parts of the picture bear a reference, the hero who gives unity to the whole. \* \* \* \* The other characters of the play, aiding in the developement of the story (plot

\* *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Litteratur—15 te Vorlesung.* Heidelberg, 1817.

properly speaking there is none) are struck out in brief indications, with a bold yet discriminating pencil. \* \* \* \* The element in which they move is a drama; such a drama as Shakspeare would have made of the subject, requiring the world for a stage, and years for its time of action. The scene shifts, the characters enter, utter a few simple words, which suggest, however, boundless wealth of thought, *and walk off again*. Some of these scenes contain merely a few speeches of a few words each, and no care is taken by the author to hint at the nature of their connexion. Yet we feel that they are organic parts of a mighty whole—we rise from the perusal of the drama with an intimate knowledge of the age into which we have wandered. With like unapparent effort, the moral beauties of that age are made to stand out from its sombre background, each in simple reliance upon its own worth, enhancing, not rivalling, the value of its fellows. This splendid edifice is reared upon a deep study of society and human character, but the philosopher no where obtrudes himself. Every thing is characteristic, every thing is in keeping;—but if we feel this, it is upon after reflection; we are too much engrossed with what is passing before our eyes, too much impressed



with a transitory belief in its reality, to have time for such reflections.\*

Before giving Göthe's account of so extraordinary a Drama, a few words as to his studies and habits at the time he wrote it must be here introduced. He informs us that on his return from Strasburg, where his father had sent him to finish a course of Jurisprudence commenced at Leipsic, "the multiplicity of his tastes, passions and pursuits" had completely divided his attention and made him averse to any regular, systematic occupation. He had at neither place, as may be supposed, paid much attention to his legal studies, but had occupied himself principally with general science and literature, wandering from one subject to another as his caprice suggested, without acquiring a practical knowledge of any. "My attainments of every kind," he says, "were entirely devoid of connexion and system." Before he went to Strasburg he had learned to speak French—he had studied Italian, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew a little—and possessed as much knowledge of English as he could obtain from the instructions of a

\* Life of Sir Walter Scott, with critical notices of his writings—by George Allan, Esq. Chap. III.

master, who undertook to teach him that language in the space of four weeks. He had also begun to exercise his talent for Poetry, in a number of detached pieces, on various subjects, and had made several attempts at dramatic composition, two of which have been published in the late editions of his works.\* A short time after his arrival in Strasburg, he accidentally became acquainted with Herder, who was then employed as the travelling tutor of the Prince of Holstein-Oldenburg. This acquaintance, his biographers say, formed an era in his life; and he tells us himself that he derived the greatest benefit from his familiar intercourse with that profound scholar, whose advice had an important influence in the direction of his future pursuits. Being dissatisfied with all his juvenile productions, many of which he had burnt, and “stimulated with the hope of producing some original and remarkable work,” he was anxiously endeavoring to fix upon a suitable subject for a new effort at composition by which he might gratify what he calls “his daily and nightly desire.” He had read Shakspeare’s historical plays with

\**Die Laune des Verliebten* and *Die Mitschuldigen*;—they are to be found in Cotta’s complete edition of Göthe’s works, published under his own direction—Vol. vii.—1828.

enthusiastic admiration, and about the same time accidentally meeting with the original autobiography of Götz von Berlichingen, published at Nuremberg in 1731, the question in some cases so difficult to decide, was speedily settled, and he determined to write a Drama, after the manner of "the immortal English poet." He however carefully concealed this determination from Herder, of whose critical observations he had the greatest dread; and indeed he seems to have spoken of it to no one, until his return to Frankfurt, when he confided it to his sister Cornelia, to whom he was tenderly attached, and whom he was in the habit of consulting with regard to all his literary efforts. But although she approved of his design, and encouraged him to begin, and although he had already acquired the preparatory knowledge necessary for his undertaking, by consulting several authors who wrote of the manners and customs of the age in which his future hero lived, and by reading with particular attention Datt's treatise *De Pace publica*\*—still the Drama made no

\*The assertion of the learned A. W. Schlegel, that the Drama of *Götz von Berlichingen* "conveys a great historical meaning," has already been quoted. Many other critics of note have also pronounced it to be strictly an *historical Drama*.

progress; he reflected and talked a great deal about it, he says, but wrote nothing—for in addition to his

*ma*, and from the care which Göthe has taken to inform us what authors he consulted before he began his labours upon it, he would seem himself desirous of giving it the same character. And yet, throughout the whole of it, prominent circumstances and events are confused and transposed without the slightest regard to their actual order and existence. Honest Götz himself is made to flourish in the reign of Maximilian I., although in fact his day was hardly commenced when Charles V. obtained possession of the Imperial throne upon the death of Maximilian in 1519—for without reaching an advanced age, Berlichingen survived Charles V., and died in 1562. The great revolt of the peasantry of Suabia and Franconia, in which Berlichingen really was implicated, broke out in 1525—but Göthe makes it occur before the catastrophe of his Drama in 1519. The power of the *Westphalian*, or *secret tribunals*, was shaken as early as 1461, by a league of a number of the German Princes, avowedly formed for the purpose of resisting so fearful a tyranny—which, followed up by the measures of Maximilian I., who exerted himself to the utmost in order to overthrow them, put such a check upon their authority, that at the period of his death they rarely ventured to assert their jurisdiction even of those criminal offences, over which it had formerly been exclusive,—the Drama, however, represents their condition as directly the reverse. There are a number of other oversights and mistakes of a minor charac-

desultory habits of thought and study, there was another cause which indisposed him to any regular

ter, some of which must have proceeded entirely from carelessness—one instance will suffice. The Archduke Carl, (afterwards Charles V.) is made to figure behind the scenes as the paramour of the beautiful Lady Adelheid; but the period at which Göthe has chosen to introduce him in Germany, is precisely that of his celebrated voyage from the Netherlands to his newly inherited government of Spain, where the distracted state of affairs which followed the sudden death of the Cardinal Ximenes must have given him too much occupation to allow even of a flying visit to the court of his grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian: and, indeed, according to the most authentic accounts, he never was in Germany at all until he went to Aix-la-Chapelle in order to assume the crown of Charlemagne in 1520.—In thus pointing out, however, the constant neglect of historic truth in *Götz von Berlichingen*, there is no intention whatever to detract from its great merits as a Drama. Göthe had an illustrious example to sanction his course—nay, his work perhaps would have been more entertaining had he chosen to exclude History from it altogether. But when we are told with an imposing air of authority, that “we rise from the perusal of this drama with an intimate knowledge of the age into which we have wandered,” we naturally are led to inquire what age it is, which has been so accurately brought before us; and in a “splendid edifice reared upon a deep study of society and human character,” we have a right to expect a proportion and symmetry for which we



mental exertion. He was early entangled in love affairs. Before he was sixteen, he had formed a romantic attachment to a pretty, though it would seem a very discreet young girl of Frankfurt, who pursued the humble occupation of a milliner. He gives a particular account of all his interviews with her, and speaks mysteriously of some criminal conduct on the part of her friends in which he was ignorantly implicated. This circumstance, however, did not change his feelings towards her, and when their clandestine intercourse was suddenly broken off by the interference of the police, it cost him a long and dangerous fit of illness. At Leipsic he was again ensnared by the beauty of his landlady's daughter, whose affections, he says, he gained without any difficulty, although he confesses that he afterwards lost them by his own cruel treatment of her; and for the third time, at Strasburg his "too susceptible heart" was captivated by the charms of another willing maiden, the daughter of a poor Protestant clergyman who resided at a short distance from the town. In none of these affairs, but particularly in the last, did Göthe seem disposed to address any dishonourable would not look even in the master pieces of uncultivated genius.

solicitations to his mistresses; although he constantly bore in mind the great superiority of his own rank, and never for a moment cherished the idea of his connexion with either of them being a permanent one. And yet he describes his grief on parting with Frederica, the clergyman's daughter, when he left Strasburg to return home to Frankfurt after he had taken his first degree, as of the most poignant character. His love was so great, and the distance between the two towns was comparatively so small, that, notwithstanding the disparity of their situations in life, he might certainly have ventured to look forward to another meeting. But he hoped for nothing of the kind, and took leave of his "adored Frederica" as he thought forever. She was of course compelled to view their separation in the same light; and accordingly sent a long farewell letter after him to Frankfurt, which increased his melancholy feelings to such a degree, that he commenced wandering about the country in the usual mood of a disappointed lover. In these wanderings, however, he found an employment which could hardly have been foreseen: "Man must live," says he, "and I therefore induced myself to take an interest in the concerns of other lovers. I endeavoured to accommodate all

their difficulties, and when I found any who had quarrelled and were about to separate, I exerted myself to bring them together again—being unwilling that others should suffer as I had suffered. I was, on this account, well known through the country by the name of *the Confidant*.” But, whatever interest or relief he may have found in these proceedings, his sister Cornelia thought them altogether unsuitable for a young student who had taken his first degree in the Law, and who, moreover, was meditating an historical drama in the style of Shakespeare. She, therefore, took him severely to task on the subject, and urged him to apply himself seriously to the composition of *Götz von Berlichingen*, of which he had talked so much, without performing any thing. The story may now be left to his own words:

“Excited by her remarks, I began one morning to write, without having sketched any plan or design beforehand. I finished the first scenes, which in the evening I read to Cornelia. She praised them very much, with some qualification, however, since she doubted whether I would go on as well as I had begun—nay, she openly expressed her want of faith in my perseverance. This only excited me

the more; I wrote incessantly the next day, and the third. Hope grew with every communication with my sister, and as I advanced, my subject became more interesting to me. In this way I continued uninterruptedly at work, without looking to the right or to the left, *till at the end of six weeks I had the pleasure of seeing the manuscript finished.* I showed it to my friend Merk, who expressed himself kindly and sensibly with regard to it, and then I sent it to Herder. But he returned it with many harsh and unfriendly observations, and even added some satirical verses, in which he treated it with ridicule. The first act was sufficiently consistent; but, as I had begun without any previous plan or design to check my imagination, in the other acts, and especially in the last, a curious passion had unconsciously misled me. While I was endeavouring to paint in strong colours the fascinating beauty of Adelheid, I fell in love with her myself: my pen was involuntarily devoted to her, and the proper hero of the drama was, on her account, comparatively neglected. After some reflection, I determined to correct this fault, and give my drama a more historical form, by leaving out whatever was fabulous, or addressed solely to the passions. With-

out therefore attempting to alter the first manuscript (which I still have in my possession in its original form) I undertook to write the whole drama over, and I applied myself to the task with such industry that *in the course of a few weeks more an entirely new piece lay finished before me*;—in which I endeavoured to exhibit the errors of a well-intentioned and chivalrous man, who, in the midst of times of violence and anarchy, usurped the place of the laws and public authority, but fell into despair as soon as he found that the only power he respected, the head of the empire, treated him as a rebellious subject.—I finished this second piece the more hastily, because I scarcely expected ever to publish it; but rather intended it as an exercise for future productions, which I should undertake with more care and preparation.”\*

And this is Göthe’s own account of his youthful labours with his maiden effort—which was published before he reached the age of manhood, but which, according to his commentators, must nevertheless be considered “a splendid edifice, reared

\**Aus meinem Leben*. 12 tes and 13 tes Buch. Vol. xxvi. pp. 143. 199, 200. Cotta’s 12mo edition of Göthe’s Works. 1829.

upon a deep study of society and human character” —“containing profound philosophic views, the result of many years of reflection”—and placing him at once upon the throne beside Shakspeare himself!—It would have been fortunate for those who honestly desire to appreciate the beauty and power of Göthe’s writings, if he had spoken with the same sincerity of some other of his works which have excited far more attention than *Götz von Berlichingen*. But, after what seems to have been an involuntary ebullition of frankness on his part, his lips—for the public—were sealed forever. The brief and unsatisfactory notices of *Werther* and *Egmont*—the last, too, contained in the posthumous volume of his *Memoirs*—have concluded all that we are ever to learn from him in illustration of his feelings and purposes as an author. He lived to a great age, and heard continually around him the disputes which were occasioned by his mystical productions, and which often approached to bitterness and personality. All the eminent literary men of the day took part in these disputes, among whom were many of his own personal friends, who were in the habit of frequent intercourse with him. He was, therefore, assuredly called upon to say something which should put a stop to such bickerings, for their sakes, if not for his



own. But, when he did interfere, it was only to divide and bewilder them more than ever—and in the judgment of posterity, the charge will be sustained, which is now regularly brought against him, that “he has designedly thrown a quantity of enigmatical and unintelligible writing into his latter works, by way of keeping up a system of discussion and strife upon his own meaning amongst the critics of his country—these disputes, had his meaning been of any value in his own eyes, he would naturally have settled by a few authoritative words from himself; but it was his policy to keep alive the feud in a case where it was of importance that his name should continue to agitate the world, but of none at all that he should be rightly interpreted.”\* When Göthe’s

\* Miss Austin’s work entitled *Characteristics of Göthe*, is well known, and deserves a high rank among the numerous productions which have been devoted to the illustration of the character and writings of “*the many-sided Poet*.”\* The notes appended to each volume are written with great talent, and some of them with a purity and simplicity of style which contrasts strangely with the *Germanisms* abounding in other parts of the work. It would seem, however, that some apology is intended for the use of these *Germanisms* in the frequent complaints which are made of the poverty of the English

\* The favourite epithet of Gothe’s admirers. Miss Austin frequently speaks of his “*wonderful manysidedness*.”

fame was at the highest, a few writers both of France and England, ventured to hint at this intentional

idiom, and its total want of power to express the beauty and force of the German: but it may be suggested that such complaints, whether in the form of an apology, or in any other form, are no proof either of good scholarship or of good sense, when applied to the language of Shakspeare and Milton.

Among the eulogies of Göthe translated from foreign writers, and introduced by Miss Austin, is one which she calls a "new and important addition to the materials for judging of Göthe," from the pen of a gentleman, "who holds the situation of tutor to the young princes of Weimar." This eulogy begins by placing "Göthe's name at the head of almost every branch of knowledge—the splendour of his literary renown threw into the shade that to which he was entitled on other grounds—his labours in natural history, and even in physical science would have sufficed to make the reputation of an ordinary *sçavant*"——and the discourse is continued throughout in the same elevated strain. The following paragraph relates to Göthe's obscurity:

"He might have revealed himself more distinctly; but mystery was with him the object of a sort of reverence, or *the result of a system*. We may suppose him to have said—I will reveal myself only to those who can understand me, and they will divine me at half a word." Vol. iii. p. 40.

This is going quite as far as the hostile critic whose language is quoted above—though the "tutor to the young princes" doubtless intends it very differently. Miss Austin herself has some remarks on the same subject:—

"Those who require that an author should reflect back upon them their own familiar thoughts, clad in varied dresses, and adorned with new-invented ornaments, will do well not to concern themselves with Göthe; he can be to them nothing but a wonder and a stumbling block. German literature is

obscurity of the most admired of his productions; but they were at once put down by the authoritative answer, that they could not understand him, and Voltaire's criticisms upon Shakspeare were held up as a memorable example to terrify them into silence. This answer can no longer be resorted to—for some of Göthe's own countrymen, who have themselves assisted in the learned illustrations of *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister*, are now beginning publicly to advocate the opinion, maintained for some time in

inextricably interwoven with German philosophy. There is not a fairy tale of Tieck, not a song of Göthe, not a play of Schiller, not a criticism of Schlegel, not a description of Humboldt, in which this under-current is not perceptible; nay, however paradoxical it may appear, I will venture to affirm that German music has received much of its peculiar character from the same source; that the compositions of Beethoven, Weber, Spohr, Mendelssohn are deeply tinctured with the same spirit. It is as well to say this frankly, since those to whom such topics and such tendencies are unpalatable, ought not to be betrayed into wasting their time." Vol. iii. note to p. 227.

This is indeed philosophy beyond the common apprehension! Mr. Carlyle's *Philosophy of Clothes* is thrown completely into the shade by it—although Miss Austin, in the preface to her book, formally yields him the precedence in these cabalistic investigations, and admits that "he can see further than she can." Her frankness in the concluding sentence of the extract should therefore receive peculiar acknowledgments.

England, that he has written nothing superior to *Werther*, his first Romance, and that, as a work of the imagination, it is in fact to be considered his most successful effort. It may be remarked, however, without altogether dissenting from this opinion, that it seems too much like running from one extreme to the other, and its correctness should be left to the judgment of another age, which will not fail to be impartial.

But, while the leading men of letters of the present day thus freely criticise Göthe's poetic attempts at the *philosophic* and the *ideal*, they all yield him their unqualified admiration whenever his genius employs itself upon the more simple theme of real life--the proper province of the Poet. It has often been admitted that the closing scene of the first part of *Faust* surpasses in effect the far-famed Episodes of *Francesca di Rimini* and *Ugolino* in Dante's *Inferno*; and indeed in every instance that he addresses himself solely to human feeling, he exhibits such power as to leave no doubt that, if confiding too much in his own strength he had not been led away in a mistaken pursuit, his name would have gone down to after generations, associated with those of the few men of genius whose works have endured the touchstone of time.

Some of his minor pieces, which have comparatively attracted little notice, certainly deserve, and perhaps may enjoy this rare distinction. *Hermann and Dorothea* is a narrative poem, having a simple plot, and dealing principally with rural life and scenery; and yet it is difficult to conceive any thing more masterly or more beautiful; the language—the versification—the sentiment are all in perfect keeping, and present throughout the living tokens of the inspiration of genius. Many of his lyrical productions should receive praise in all respects equal to this, and one or two of his short miscellaneous poems might be mentioned, as belonging to the same elevated class. *Götz von Berlichingen*, it is true, cannot be compared with any of these; but it is nevertheless a remarkable proof of Göthe's talent in a line of composition which he has attempted but seldom. He has fully accomplished in it all which he says himself he endeavoured to do, however far it may fall below the *ideal* standard to which his commentators have undertaken to raise it.\*

\* The following extract contains a brief criticism of some pieces which are said to rank immediately after *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister*:—

“To the dramatic works of Göthe we are disposed to pay more homage; but neither in the absolute amount of our

A few words yet remain to be said on the subject of the English version of this Drama which is now offered to the public. In Göthe's Posthumous Works, published by Cotta in 1832-33, a whole volume is taken up with two dramatic pieces, which homage at all professing to approach his public admirers, nor to distribute the proportions of this homage amongst his several performances, according to the graduations of *their* scale. The *Iphigenie* is built upon the old subject of Iphigenia in Tauris, as treated by Euripides and other Grecian dramatists; and if we are to believe a Schlegel, it is in beauty and effect a mere echo, or reverberation from the finest strains of the old Grecian music. That it is somewhat nearer to the Greek model than a play after the fashion of Racine, we grant. Setting aside such faithful transcripts from the antique as the Samson Agonistes, we might consent to view Göthe as that one amongst the moderns who has made the closest approximation to the Greek stage: "*Proximus*," we might say with Quintilian, but with him we must add "*sed longo intervallo*;" and if in the second rank, yet nearer to the third than to the first. Two other dramas, the *Clavigo* and the *Egmont*, fall below the *Iphigenie* by the very character of their pretensions; the first as too openly renouncing the grandeurs of the ideal; the second as confessedly violating the historic truth of character, without temptation to do so, and without any consequent indemnification. The *Tasso* has been supposed to realize an Italian beauty of genial warmth and of sunny repose; but from the common defect of German criticism—the absence of all sufficient illustrations—it is as difficult to understand the true nature and constituents of the supposed Italian standard set up for the regulation of our judgments, as it is to measure the degree of approach made to that standard in this particular work."



prove to be two distinct variations of the drama of *Götz von Berlichingen* published in the preceding editions of his works. One is entitled *The history of Godfrey of Berlichingen dramatised*, and the other *Götz von Berlichingen, laboured (over) for the stage*.\* The former of these pieces is probably the drama as Göthe originally wrote it, before he undertook to remodel it as he tells us in his *Memoirs*, from which an extract has already been presented—the latter is evidently the work of his more advanced years. The drama is in fact for a second time entirely changed. Several new scenes are introduced—others are transposed, and some are cut out altogether. The dialogue is regularly written over—the characters are sketched with greater distinctness and vigour—the plot or story is improved, and although there is the same disregard to *the unities*, considerable care has been taken to avoid any direct collision with *the probable*. This new labour of the author upon what seems to have been a favourite production, suggested

\* Göthe's nachgelassene Werke. 2ter Band. Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1832.

Inhalt:

*Geschichte Gottfriedens von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand—dramatisirt.*

*Götz von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand. Schauspiel in fünf Aufzügen—für die Bühne bearbeitet.*

the idea of the following version, which has been undertaken after a separate translation of each of the three pieces, and an attentive comparison of their different scenes. It is singular that Göthe at a late period of his life should have seriously employed himself in correcting and giving another form to the first production with which he appeared before the public; and his commentators, who have indulged in such lofty language with regard to that production, are now much embarrassed in what manner to speak of this unexpected revision of it—presented to the world after an interval of so many years. They have certainly precluded themselves from allowing that there was room for any improvement; and although some of them have asserted that in order to adapt it to scenic representation, it was necessary to write the piece over again—still as it often has been represented with the greatest success in its first form at the Imperial Theatre at Vienna, this view is by no means a satisfactory one. The dilemma, however, is of their own creating, and serves to illustrate still further the remarks which have been made upon the nature of their criticisms:—

Inanes

Hoc juvat, haud illud quærentes, num sine sensu  
Tempore num faciant alieno.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

---

THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN.

THE BISHOP OF BAMBERG.

GOETZ VON BERLICHINGEN.

ELISABETH, *his wife.*

MARIE, *his sister.*

CARL, *his son.*

FRANZ VON SICKINGEN.

HANS VON SELBIZ.

ADELBERT VON WEISLINGEN.

ADELHEID VON WALLDORF.

JUDGES OF THE SECRET TRIBUNAL.

BROTHER MARTIN.

GEORGE, *Page of Berlichingen.*

FRANZ, *Page of Weislingen.*

TWO NURENBERG MERCHANTS.

FAUD, } *Men at arms of Berlichingen.*

PETER, }

METZLER, }

SIEVERS, }

LINK, }

KOHL, }

*Leaders of the rebel Peasants.*

GIPSIES, MEN AT ARMS, PEASANTS, SERVANTS, &c.



# GOETZ VON BERLICHINGEN,

WITH

## THE IRON HAND.

---

### ACT I.

SCENE I.—SCHWARZENBERG IN FRANCONIA,—  
A TAVERN.

METZLER, SIEVERS, *two Horsemen of the Bishop of Bamberg*, FAUD, *and* PETER *sitting apart by the fire.*

SIEVERS.

Come, surly Metzler, one more glass of brandy, that our parting may be christian-like.

METZLER.

Good—but first bring your story about Berlichingen, to an end. The Bamberg horsemen there, sit

scowling bravely at us, and if they want a fair excuse to fight, in God's name let them have it!

SIEVERS.

Bamberg horsemen! what do they here?

METZLER.

Weislingen has been at the castle with the Count for two days past; they were his escort here, and are to ride back with him to Bamberg.

FAUD [*listens eagerly, and then aside to PETER*,  
Dost hear Camerad? Our weary hunt is up: Weislingen is with Count Schwarzenberg!

SIEVERS.

Who is this Weislingen of whom you talk so much?

METZLER.

The Bishop's right hand—you'll know him soon—a powerful lord, and one of the worst plotters against Berlichingen.

SIEVERS.

Let him beware then.

METZLER.

I say amen! But I pray you to your story once



again. (*Raising his voice.*) Berlichingen seems always at war with the Lord Bishop of Bamberg. I thought they had pretended to settle all their ancient quarrels.

SIEVERS.

Yes——settle an ancient quarrel with a priest, if you are able! When things at last put on a war-like look, and the Bishop saw that he must be a loser, he came down upon his knees, and begged outright to bring about a reconciliation. And the true hearted Götz at once was ready to hold out his hand, as he always is, when he has the advantage.

METZLER.

God save him! a noble knight.

SIEVERS.

And then, no sooner was suspicion put to rest, than the false kerl sent out a party and seized a messenger that Berlichingen had despatched to Selbiz! He hoped to find papers on the varlet, which he might use to ruin Berlichingen with the Emperor. But the time is coming when he'll answer for that and for other evil deeds.

METZLER.

So——the priest struck the last blow—and what said the fiery Götz?

SIEVERS.

He was wild with rage, and waylaid the Bishop with forty horsemen on the high road to Bamberg. His plan was well contrived, but in spite of all his care, the lying bald pate slipped from the clutch of his Iron Hand.

FIRST BAMBERG HORSEMAN.

What do you say there about our Lord the Bishop? Are you seeking a quarrel, my masters!

SIEVERS.

Saddle your own horses, Sir cut-purse! you'll find that our donkeys kick.

FIRST HORSEMAN (*starting up.*)

Take that, pot brawler!

(*Gives SIEVERS a blow on the face.*)

METZLER.

Strike the dog dead! (*they both fall upon him.*)

SECOND HORSEMAN (*drawing his sword.*)

You have another to deal with, cowards!

FAUD (*to Peter.*)

Now, old Peter! out, and away to Winsdorfer! The fray here is yet more good fortune for us; we should else have scarce got off without the suspicions of these accursed Bambergers.

PETER.

You go too fast, Camerad—the fight looks serious, and the boors, you know, are our friends.

FAUD.

The devil, milksop! Let the fools throttle each other! Our news has staid too long already. To horse for Berlichingen! [*Exeunt.*

---

SCENE II.—WINSDORFER FOREST.

BERLICHINGEN (*before the door of a cabin made of fallen trees.*)

Where do my trusty horsemen delay so long? I must walk faster or sleep will overpower me. Five days and nights upon the watch—a wearisome time, and anxious, but when I have you, Weislingen, I shall forget it. George! George! I am your debtor,

wily priest. You have sent your smooth-tongued Weislingen from Count to Count, from Baron to Baron, and blackened me till my name has become a by-word. My limbs are numb, I must walk still faster—you have escaped me Bishop—'tis well—Weislingen is left to pay the forfeit for you—so let him pay it. George! Does the yunker hear me—George! George!

*Enter GEORGE, with a large cuirass buckled upon him.*

GEORGE.

Dread Sir!

BERLICHINGEN.

Where have you been? you have not slept? What mummeries are these? Come nearer, boy—be not afraid. Before long, you will be strong enough to wear a breast-plate of your own, and bend a cross-bow too. You have there Hans' cuirass?

GEORGE.

He wished to sleep a little, and threw it off.

BERLICHINGEN.

He is more happy than his master.

GEORGE.

Be not angry. I brought the cuirass lightly

away, and with the long sword you gave me, kept guard upon the meadow.

BERLICHINGEN.

And slashed about you there like a Bamberg horseman. Wo to the briars and thistles that came in your way! Is Hans still asleep?

GEORGE.

At your cry he sprang up, and shouted to me—I began with haste to undo the breast straps, but still I heard you call louder and louder—so I ran hither, even as I am.

BERLICHINGEN.

Go—carry Hans his arms again. Bid him look well to our horses.

GEORGE.

I have already fed and saddled them—you can mount in the instant.

BERLICHINGEN.

Go, then, and bring me wine. Let Hans be ready, for each moment I expect old Faud and Peter with their news. What ails you, boy?

GEORGE.

May I not go with you, dread Sir?

## BERLICHINGEN.

Another time, George, when we are to set upon a caravan of merchants.

## GEORGE.

Another time! Alas, my Lord, you have said that so often. Let me go this time—I promise to keep behind, or to watch on one side. I can pick up the shafts from the cross-bows.

## BERLICHINGEN.

The next time, George, you shall go, by my word. You have no arms, and the fight will be a hard one. The coming times, too, need men to act in them. I tell you, boy, that you shall see princes humbled before a man whom they now proscribe and hate. Go, take back the cuirass, and bring me wine.

[*Exit* GEORGE.]

Where do my horsemen delay so long? I begin to fear some disappointment. By heaven! a monk comes through the forest! What strange adventure next—

(*Enter* BROTHER MARTIN.)

God save you, reverend Father—whither so late?

## BROTHER MARTIN.

Thanks, noble Sir, I am only an humble Brother,



called Augustin in the cloister, though I love better my baptismal name, Martin—Brother Martin.

BERLICHINGEN.

You look wearied, Brother Martin, and are doubtless thirsty too—(*Enter GEORGE with wine*)—and here comes wine, at the right moment.

BROTHER MARTIN (*to George.*)

Bring me a drink of water, my brave boy—I'll thank you for it. (*Exit GEORGE.*) I dare drink no wine.

BERLICHINGEN.

Is your vow against wine?

BROTHER MARTIN.

No, my Lord, my vow is not against wine, but wine is against my vow—so I drink no wine.

BERLICHINGEN.

How do you make out that?

BROTHER MARTIN.

'Tis well you understand me not! I mean that the life of man consists in eating and drinking.

BERLICHINGEN.

Indeed!

BROTHER MARTIN.

When you have eaten and drunken, you are like one new-born. Wine rejoices the heart of man, and joy is the mother of all the virtues. When you have drunken wine, all your powers are doubled—you are quick to contrive, bold to undertake, and fortunate in achieving.

BERLICHINGEN.

As I drink it, you have truly spoken.—George!

BROTHER MARTIN.

It was of gallant knights like you, that I spoke. But we—— (Enter GEORGE.)

BERLICHINGEN (*draws him aside.*)

Go to the Dachsbach road, and lay your ear upon the ground—listen till you hear the feet of horses, and then be with me like the wind.

[Exit GEORGE.]

BROTHER MARTIN.

But we—when we have eaten and drunken, we are the opposite of all that is becoming and manly—dead to every noble aspiration, incapable of thought—wandering in prayer, and restless upon our bed.

BERLICHINGEN.

A goblet of my wine, Brother Martin, will not

disturb your sleep. You have travelled far to-day.  
(*Drinks.*) I drink to your vocation.

BROTHER MARTIN.

To idleness you mean. Had heaven made me even the poorest vassal, I might have been most happy; but now it is impossible! My Superior loves me, and as he knows that I am ever restless and distracted, he sends me forth to find some respite from the fever which so incessantly torments me. I go now to the Bishop of Constanz.

BERLICHINGEN.

Why do you gaze so wistfully at me, Brother?

BROTHER MARTIN.

The glitter of your armour fascinates me.

BERLICHINGEN.

'Tis heavy, and wearisome to bear.

BROTHER MARTIN.

Alas! what is not wearisome in this sad world? And what can be more wearisome than my own wretched, monotonous existence? Poverty, chastity, and obedience—vows which may soon be taken, but which can hardly be performed! And under

the load of such vows must I drag out my life in spiritless endurance, or else awaken the gnawings of a conscience which may indeed be blunted, but which can never die! O, my Lord, what are the dangers and anxieties of your life, to the silent sorrows of a state, in which, through a mistaken desire to draw nearer to God, the best and warmest longings of our nature are forbidden and condemned!

BERLICHINGEN.

You have reason to be sad, Brother, but let me drink to your happy return.

BROTHER MARTIN.

That you must drink only for yourself. A return to my prison can never be a happy one. When you return, my Lord, to your moated castle, from long peril and conflict, with the knowledge of your bravery and strength, which no weariness can take from you, and for the first time, after incessant watchfulness, sink softly to slumber, safe from all hostile attack and midnight surprise, 'tis like gushing water to the burnings of consuming thirst! And then——

BERLICHINGEN.

Why do you hesitate?

BROTHER MARTIN.

And your women! Have you a wife, my Lord?

BERLICHINGEN.

A noble and a chaste wife.

BROTHER MARTIN.

That man is fortunate, whose wife is chaste.

*(Enter GEORGE.)*

GEORGE.

My Lord, I hear the feet of horses—they come at full speed!

BERLICHINGEN.

Lead out my horse, then, and let Hans mount at once. Farewell, Brother Martin! Have faith in God. He is the father of us all, and will be merciful at last. Be patient and long suffering—nothing else can now remain for you.

BROTHER MARTIN.

I know it well. But, my Lord, before we part, let me demand your name?

BERLICHINGEN.

My name had better be unknown.

*(Gives him his left hand.)*

BROTHER MARTIN.

Why do you stretch forth your left hand? Am I not worthy of the knightly right hand?

BERLICHINGEN.

Were you the Emperor himself, Brother Martin, you would have to be content to grasp the left. The right, though not useless in battle, to the gentle pressure of love and friendship has long been cold and senseless. It is the same with the gauntlet which covers it. You see it is of iron.

BROTHER MARTIN.

So, then, you are Götz von Berlichingen! I thank thee, O God! that thou hast permitted me to see this man, whom the mighty hate, and to whom the oppressed fly. (*He grasps BERLICHINGEN's right hand.*) Give me this hand—let me kiss it.

BERLICHINGEN.

You shall not.

BROTHER MARTIN.

'Tis of more worth than a holy relique hand, through which the blood of martyrs once hath flown. (*Still grasping his hand.*) Inanimate semblance!



quicken'd by the spirit's trust in God! There was a monk of our cloister, my Lord, who was your confessor when you lost this hand at Landshut. He related to us much of your sufferings, and anxious fears, lest you should be maimed and helpless, and forever hindered from soldiers' duty. 'Twas he who told you of the knight whose right hand was stricken off in the wars of the holy sepulchre, but who thereafter, still fought bravely, and at last died upon the field, under his own victorious banner. Then at once, with lofty confidence and faith, you said, "It surely would avail me nothing, had I twelve hands, without the grace of God. So, then, trusting in him with but one poor hand, I may, like that bold knight——"

[*A trumpet sounds without.*]

BERLICHINGEN.

Worthy Brother Martin, I must away in haste. Farewell till we shall meet again.

BROTHER MARTIN.

Forget me not, my Lord, as I shall not forget you.

BERLICHINGEN.

Who can say where we shall meet again? Yet, if we both, with steadfast hearts, order our footsteps

in the path of truth and honour, we cannot fail to meet again, and that before we journey far. Injustice and hypocrisy are in the cloister, Brother, as well as in the camp. You should combat them with spiritual weapons, in holy stillness, while I now march against them in the open field. God help us both, and so—farewell! [*Exeunt.*

---

SCENE III.—SALOON AT JAXTHAUSEN.

ELISABETH, MARIE, CARL.

ELISABETH.

I cannot tell what has delayed my Lord so long. Already five days and nights away, and yet he said his absence would scarce exceed so many hours.

MARIE.

Our constant fears are even worse than real dangers. My brother dares too much, and in the excitement of his wild adventures forgets those whom he leaves behind to tremble and to weep.

ELISABETH.

Sister, you do wrong to speak thus before Berlichingen's son!

CARL.

Must father dare so much?

MARIE.

Such is his pleasure.

ELISABETH.

Listen, boy!—There was a poor wood-cutter in Franconia, who had a little cottage and a field of corn, which was all his living. And the huntsmen of the Baron of Wildenholz rode furiously over the corn, with their horses and their hounds, and broke and crushed it down upon the earth. Then the wood-cutter, who saw that the bread was taken away from his children, went to the castle of the Baron, and prayed him to make redress for the injury he had received. But the Baron would not hear his complaint, and his servants beat the wood-cutter, and thrust him forth from the castle. So he came, at the last, to your father, and told him of the cruelty and injustice of the Lord of Wildenholz. And your father was angry, and rode forth at once, and went alone—without his men-at-arms—to the castle of the Baron, where he reproached him for the wrong he had done, and required him to pay the wood-cutter twice the value of the corn destroyed by his hunts-

men. Now, though the Baron is a haughty and powerful Lord, still he feared Berlichingen with the Iron Hand—so he promised to recompense the wood-cutter even for all he had lost. And, before many days, one of his serving-men carried fifty golden ducats to the wood-cutter's cottage, who was content, and bought bread for his children, and no longer feared the violence of the huntsmen of Wildenholz. Would not you also have ridden forth like your father, my son?

CARL.

No, no, mother—not alone through the thick, dark forest and brakes—elves and gipsies are there!

ELISABETH.

A foolish boy—to have fear of elves and gipsies.

MARIE.

You say well, Carl, and when you are grown to be a man, you shall live in quiet at your castle like a christian knight, without ever madly wandering forth to seek adventures. The daring knights commit more wrongs than they redress, and I wonder not that any who love peace and mercy, should fly for refuge from this world of violence and clamour to the tranquil and holy silence of the cloister!

ELISABETH.

Sister, you know not what you say. God grant that this young child may reach his manhood, bold and fortunate. May he be always fearless in the hour of danger; and to the friends who trust him, faithful even to death! Unlike the perfidious Weislingen, who now is every where esteemed and favoured, and who yet has acted so falsely—so treacherously with your brother.

MARIE.

We should not judge too rashly, Elisabeth. My brother now is bitterly incensed against him, and you partake his angry feelings. I am but a spectator of your difference, and may therefore be impartial.

ELISABETH.

His conduct cannot be extenuated.

MARIE.

Much that I have heard, has disposed me in his favour. Your husband himself relates many stories of his strong affection and manly courage, and how often does he talk of the happy days of their youth, when they were pages together at the court of the Margrave!

ELISABETH.

It may be so. But tell me, what good can ever dwell in that man who has estranged himself from the faithful companions of his early days—who has sold his service to the enemies of a true and noble friend—and who now, by secret practices, would deprive us of our sovereign's favour, from whom till lately we received such frequent marks of gracious confidence. [*A trumpet sounds suddenly without.*]

CARL.

'Tis father's march! I know it well—the guard are opening the gates!

(*Enter FAUD.*)

FAUD.

The hunt is up—the prey is in the snare! God forgive me, and save you, noble ladies——

ELISABETH.

Old man, you are welcome, if Weislingen be your prisoner——

FAUD.

He is, with three horsemen.

ELISABETH.

Wherefore have you made us wait so long?

FAUD.

Five days and nights, gracious Lady, we watched for him between Nurenberg and Bamberg—he came not, and yet we knew that he was on the road. At last a sudden chance disclosed his track. He had turned off upon his journey, and was resting quietly at the castle of Count Schwarzenberg——

ELISABETH.

Whom he was endeavouring, by his crafty speech, to engage with the enemies of your brother, Marie, --a proof of *strong affection and manly courage!*

FAUD.

I brought the news in haste to my Lord. Away! and we dashed into the Haslacher forest. And, as we rode swiftly through the still night, we saw a pack of hungry wolves devouring sheep—they had torn the shepherd and the flock were scattered. Then my lord laughed, and cried “Good luck to you, my merry rovers, and good luck to us, too,” and we all rejoiced in that propitious sign. But soon came Weislingen with four men-at-arms——

MARIE.

And did my brother fight with him?



FAUD.

As my Lord ordered, my Camerad and I, both of a sudden sprang upon him, and nestled so closely to him, that he could neither call nor stir. My Lord and Hans assailed the men at arms; but they were cowards, and yielded themselves prisoners with scarce a blow—one has escaped—they were too many to be guarded well.

ELISABETH.

'Twas happily and boldly done!

FAUD.

And then we took from Weislingen the signs of knighthood—his sword and his right spur and gauntlet—and told him that he was the prisoner of Götz von Berlichingen.

MARIE.

He should be much cast down.

FAUD.

Gloomy enough he seems to be, but speaks no word.

ELISABETH.

I am eager to behold him—are they far behind?

FAUD.

They ride now through the valley, and must soon be here.

ELISABETH.

Sister, take you the key of the wine cellar, and bring forth the best. They have deserved it. I go to prepare the dinner for our noble guest. [*Exit.*

CARL.

Aunt, I will with you.

MARIE.

Come then, sir; but beware of elves and gipsies.  
[*Exit with CARL.*

FAUD.

That boy is not his father's—he would else have gone with me to the stables. [*Exit.*

(*Enter BERLICHINGEN and WEISLINGEN, with servants.*)

BERLICHINGEN.

Old Faud has well arrived before me. Come, unbuckle my armour and bring my doublet—I can now take my long desired rest. Brother Martin, you indeed said truly! We owe you an anxious and

a tiring watch, Weislingen. Be not so sad—throw off your armour—your garments have come safe, I doubt not—and if they should be lost, I can lend you of mine own.

WEISLINGEN.

It matters not.

BERLICHINGEN.

I have a gay and handsome doublet for you. I wore it at the marriage of the noble Count Palatine—the very time your Lord, the Bishop, was most incensed against me. Fourteen days before, I had seized two of his ships upon the Main; and, as Franz von Sickingen and I were mounting the palace steps together, we saw the Bishop standing at the top. He stretched his hand to Franz, who was the first to pass, and gave it likewise to me, for I was close behind. Then I smiled and said to the Landgrave of Hanau, who, by chance, stood near, “My Lord the Bishop of Bamberg, has given me his hand—I venture that he knew me not.” The Bishop heard me, for I spoke aloud, and came forthwith, and said with haughty mien, “You have guessed well, sir knight of Berlichingen. I gave you my hand because I knew you not.” I then answered straight, “My Lord,

since I received your courtesy because you knew me not, herewith you have back your hand again—" and reached him forth my iron glove. Then he grew red with choler, and turned quick away and spoke with the Count Palatine, and with the Prince of Nassau, and complained that I should thus have answered him. But they would not listen, and all the company were pleased to see the overbearing priest smart for his arrogance.

WEISLINGEN.

I would that I were left alone!

BERLICHINGEN.

Why should you speak thus? I pray you be not unhappy. You are in my power, but you know well that I shall not abuse it.

WEISLINGEN.

That is your duty as a knight—I am a prisoner—and for the rest it matters little!

(*Enter CARL.*)

BERLICHINGEN.

Have you come at last to see your father, boy? How have you spent the time?

CARL.

Well, father—aunt says well. I have learned much——

BERLICHINGEN.

Indeed!

CARL.

Shall I tell you about the Elf King?

BERLICHINGEN.

After dinner.

CARL.

I know yet something more.

BERLICHINGEN.

What should that be?

CARL.

Jaxthausen is a village and castle in the Jaxt. It has belonged two hundred years and more to the Lords of Berlichingen, free of knight service, and in their own demesne.

BERLICHINGEN.

Do you not know the Lord of Berlichingen?

CARL (*bewildered.*)

Jaxthausen——

BERLICHINGEN.

The boy is too learned to know his own father.  
To whom does Jaxthausen belong?

CARL.

Jaxthausen is a village and castle in the Jaxt. It has belonged——

BERLICHINGEN.

I ask not that. Each path, and brake, and ford of my father's home, I knew well, long—long before I could repeat their names.—Where is your mother, —in the kitchen?

CARL.

Yes, father, and to-day we are to have white radishes and a roasted lamb for dinner!

BERLICHINGEN.

Do you know that too, sir cook?

CARL.

And for me, aunt has a roasted apple, which I may eat after dinner.

BERLICHINGEN.

Can you not eat it raw?

CARL.

But, father, it is better roasted.

BERLICHINGEN.

I can find no answer for that. Weislingen, I

shall soon be here again. I must leave you for a moment, to speak with my wife. Come, Carl!

CARL.

Who is that man, father?

BERLICHINGEN.

Go, bid him welcome, and tell him to be merry.

CARL.

There, good man—have you a hand? Be merry, Sir, dinner will soon be ready. [*Carl runs out.*

WEISLINGEN.

Happy child, who knows no sorrow, save when the dinner stays too long. You have my earnest wishes, Berlichingen, that your hopes may not be thwarted in your boy!

BERLICHINGEN.

The more light the deeper shadow; but, come what will, it may be calmly borne! [*Exit.*

WEISLINGEN (*alone.*)

Shall I not awake and find all this a dream? In Berlichingen's power, from whom I had scarce freed myself—whose overthrow I had contrived, and the very thought of whom I shunned like fire! And he



—the old, true-hearted Götz—who can be near him, and not be won by him? Great God! what will happen from this! You are returned once more, Adelbert, to the old hall, where, as children, we have played together, and where we loved each other unlike this world—happy, happy times, now gone forever! Alas, I feel so truly nothing here! There is the chamber where we slept together—there the chapel where we knelt and prayed together—there the valley where we rambled together—in no joyful—no sorrowful moment were we ever parted. This place awakens all the slumbering feelings of the past, and startles forgotten echoes in my soul! And now my thoughts wander back to the Lord Bishop's court, where I can see their trouble and distrust, as they learn that I am Berlichingen's prisoner. The present and the past are mingled here in strange, bewildering confusion!

(*Enter BERLICHINGEN.*)

BERLICHINGEN.

Till the dinner be served, let us once more talk with each other, as in former times. Think that you are again in the castle of old Götz. 'Tis a long, long while, Weislingen, since we have met—where is the confidence of our early days?

WEISLINGEN.

Those days are gone!

BERLICHINGEN.

God forbid! True, we can scarce be happier than we were when at the Margrave's court—where we played and slept together—but other pleasant days may yet await us. My memory dwells willingly upon our youth—you must remember my quarrel with the Pole, whose curled hair, by chance, I ruffled with my elbow.

WEISLINGEN.

It was at table, and he stabbed at you with a dinner knife.

BERLICHINGEN.

Then I struck him down, and you stepped in before his friends, who would have fallen upon me. We were always ready to uphold each other, and were much talked of by the court for our fidelity. The Margrave used to drink to us as Castor and Pollux.

WEISLINGEN.

The Bishop of Würzburg first called us so.

BERLICHINGEN.

I well remember him; a learned and a courteous gentleman. He often praised our mutual attachment, and said, that man was truly happy who made himself the brother of his friend.

WEISLINGEN.

No more, I pray you.

BERLICHINGEN.

And, why no more? Is there aught that can offend you in the recollection of the happy days we passed together? We once had neither separate joy nor sorrow—our interests ever were the same, and in the crowd of selfish, flattering courtiers, we alone had no care but for each other. You were my whole trust and consolation when I lost this good right hand at Landshut; you watched by me day and night—you cheered my sinking spirits; and when despair would fasten on me, you wept with me like a brother! I then hoped,—Adelbert will be henceforth to me in place of my right hand.—And, now——

WEISLINGEN.

Break off, for I can bear no more.

BERLICHINGEN.

Had you but followed me to Brabant, as I so

earnestly besought you, all had still been well. But you were held back by the false glitter of a life at court, and by the smiles and leers of wanton women.

WEISLINGEN.

Why do you thus drag forth the past?

BERLICHINGEN.

Would to God that I could forget it, or that it had never been! Are you not born as free—as noble, as any knight in all our Father-land? Independent, subject to the Emperor alone—and yet you bow yourself beneath the feet of vassals! What have you to do with my Lord the Bishop of Bamberg? Because his domains are bordering upon yours, do you fear the inroads of his overgrown power? I have friends and men at arms enough to set him at defiance! By heaven! you are degraded from the rank of a free knight, who serves but God and the Emperor, and sunk among a herd of fawning parasites, to pander to the passions of a petty tyrant, whose treachery and vice have long made him a blot even upon the Priesthood!

WEISLINGEN.

Will you hear me speak?

BERLICHINGEN.

What can you have to say?

WEISLINGEN.

You look upon our princes, as a wolf regards the shepherds. And do you then blame them, that they should attempt to save their defenceless vassals and their own firesides? They are not secure, even for a single moment from the assaults of lawless knights who slay the subjects of the empire upon the high roads, and in the broad face of day plunder and destroy castles and villages! The dominions of our gracious sovereign too, are now threatened on all sides by our common enemy, the 'Turks—he calls to us for help—and can afford us none. There was but one way left, to check this wide spread violence and rapine—a league between the lesser Barons and the greater, which has already brought about the dawnings of tranquillity and peace in our distracted land. And yet you still proscribe us, Berlichingen, because we have thus rallied in our own defence beneath the banners of a power which is near, instead of vainly calling to a distant Majesty which can scarce protect itself!

BERLICHINGEN.

I undertand you well. Were your princes, Weis-

lingen, as you paint them, we should soon have what we all so earnestly desire. Tranquillity and peace! By my soul, I do believe that every bird of prey gladly devours its plundered food in quiet and security! The common weal! they would not stir a hair to further it. And with his majesty, the Emperor, they long have played a treacherous game. His wish has always been to do well, and he has therefore given a willing ear to plausible suggestions, and daily plans which seemed wisely contrived for the advancement of the public good. 'Twas easy to persuade a monarch to exert his power. The imperial archives are filled with proclamations issued in quick succession, which were forthwith forgotten and thrown aside, when their crafty instigators had served their purpose with them. Your gentle princes boast of tranquillity and peace, while they oppress the poor with ruthless hand, and hold our knighthood at their feet!

WEISLINGEN.

You are free to speak—I am the prisoner.

BERLICHINGEN.

Were your conscience clear, you would be free also. Weislingen, I must speak yet more plainly. I have long been a thorn in the eyes of your most

holy league. Sickingen and Selbiz share their hate with me, because, in bold defiance of their power, we have sworn an oath to yield our faith and service to none beside the Emperor! They have drawn their nets around me—slandered me—basely slandered me with my sovereign—estranged my ancient friends—and even threatened me—a loyal subject—with the ban of the empire! They must have me out of the way. I am strong enough to excite their fears, and they will leave no art untried to bring me down to ruin. 'Twas for this purpose that your Lord the Bishop seized my messenger to Selbiz; but the poor hireling proved faithful, and was unwilling to betray his master. And in all these most unworthy practices you, Weislingen, have been their tool!

WEISLINGEN.

Berlichingen!

BERLICHINGEN.

Not a word more—you cannot justify yourself.

(*Enter CARL.*)

CARL.

Dinner, father, dinner!

BERLICHINGEN.

A timely message. Come, Adelbert, my wife and

D



sister will, I hope, persuade you to forget my rude sincerity of speech. You were once a gay gallant enough—eager to win the favour of fair women. Come, and for a brief time at least, let us blot out the past!

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—SALOON AT JAXTHAUSEN.

MARIE, WEISLINGEN.

MARIE.

You have sworn to love me. Alas! there is no need to swear. I am, I fear, too willing to believe you, and even to imagine there is a destiny to whose mysterious influence we may owe our mutual love!

WEISLINGEN.

Whether it be chance or destiny, my gentle love, I cannot tell; but now my soul is bound to yours beyond recall. My numberless ambitious schemes, which have so long engrossed my thoughts—the wily artifices and intrigues of court, with its alluring pleasures—all—all have faded away from my memory like the delusions of a dream, and I have left no other feeling save my love for you. I can

scarce believe there ever was a time in which I loved you not—when my whole being thrilled not at the thought of your caresses—when I could not hope for transport and repose on this, my own unsullied bosom. [*He folds his arms around her.*]

MARIE.

Dear Adelbert, I must leave you—your voice—your embrace have a strange influence over me—I cannot—dare not stay.

WEISLINGEN.

This fear does me much wrong, Marie! Guileless love like ours, is pleasant in the eyes of Deity himself.

MARIE.

It may be so—but I have been told that caresses are entangling chains; and maidens, when they love, are weaker than ever Samson was, after his locks were shorn by his faithless leman.

WEISLINGEN.

And who taught you that?

MARIE.

The Lady Abbess of my convent. She gave me all her care till I had reached my sixteenth year,

and I look no more in this selfish world for an affection warm and pure like her's. She once had loved, and could therefore talk of love. Her heart was full of gentleness, but strong and deep in every feeling.

WEISLINGEN.

In that she was indeed like you.—Dear Marie, how shall I ever thank you, that you wept when you first saw me here a prisoner, and by so many timid, yet sweet attentions, made me forget what at first I thought an overwhelming evil.

MARIE.

When God sends misfortune on us, he is like the skilful husbandman who wounds the bosom of his fields with the sharpest ploughshare, that he may open them to the influence of heavenly light and dew. Our affection began its growth in sorrow—you have seen it bud and blossom, and now it bears the fairest flowers of love—they bloom thick around you! [WEISLINGEN *kisses her.*] Adelbert, I pray you, let me go—I cannot stay here thus.

WEISLINGEN.

One moment longer—dear, lovely girl! You surely do not fear me now?

MARIE.

Our Lady Abbess often compared love to beautiful and fragile flowers, and wo to him, she said, who rudely breaks them! By one unholy touch their freshness is forever faded, and then—they are thrown aside to wither and to die! But if they happily should bear their golden fruit—to faithful hearts they prove a source of purest pleasure, which can never weary, and which can never fail.

WEISLINGEN.

Alas! dear Marie, I now feel how hard will be my parting from you! For many—many weary days I shall not hear your gentle voice, nor feel the soft pressure of these fairy hands. Away, amidst scenes and men that can no more insnare me, with what earnest longing shall my thoughts return to these well known halls, where the hours of my childhood glided so swiftly—so happily—where my manhood has been crowned with a virtuous woman's love! Will you be sorrowful when I am gone?

MARIE.

A little sorrowful,—but 'tis better for us both, that you should now be absent for a time—and I expect,

even anxiously, your handsome page, whom you despatched to Bamberg. We have had some dangerous moments here together.

WEISLINGEN.

Still this strange, unnatural fear.—Am I bereft of reason?

MARIE.

Reason! You know well there is no reason in a love like ours. Nay, look not so; I love you not the less, because I wish you gone.

WEISLINGEN.

Your Lady Abbess, I should say, carried her lessons much too far, Marie. It is most true, that the noisy world with all its clashing interests and pursuits, is nothing to us, when we are thus folded in each other's arms, and every thought and feeling centred in one deep, fervent longing. But, because we love, our desires are pure, and come down to us from God himself. We are what he made us, and among the fairest of the works of his creating power, is human love! Henceforth, I am to watch over you by day and night—to cherish you nearer and dearer than my life—to save you from all harm and evil—to open my bosom to every shaft of sorrow

which may be aimed to pierce you—to be ever with you, in pain and sickness, in adversity, and in death—and yet you fear to trust me!

MARIE.

No more, dear Adelbert—no more—ah, here comes my brother!

(*Enter BERLICHINGEN.*)

BERLICHINGEN.

Your gallant page is safe back again from Bamberg. He can scarce speak for weariness and hunger, and yet he has made shift to tell me, that my Lord the Bishop still refuses to give up my messenger. So let it be—but no matter how that difference may end, Adelbert, you now are free. I demand nothing from you, save your word, that in the coming struggle you will lend no aid, neither open nor concealed, to those who have so eagerly proclaimed themselves my enemies.

WEISLINGEN.

Here I grasp your hand, and from this moment let confidence and friendship be between us, like the eternal laws of nature! I now take this other hand, (*turning to MARIE,*) and as a seal and



token of my truth, I ask from you permission to possess it.

BERLICHINGEN.

Sister, how shall I frame my answer?

MARIE.

According to the value you may set upon an alliance with your earliest friend.

BERLICHINGEN.

And according to the bent of my coy sister's inclinations. Nay, you need not blush to own that which your telltale eyes betrayed so long ago. My blessing be upon your union;—let me join your hands. My friend and brother!—I thank you, sister; you can do something more than spin poor flax and wool. You have woven me a chain by which I may forever hold this bird of Paradise. You seem constrained, Adelbert! what is there wanting to your happiness? I—am most happy—too happy. Ah! now my dream is well explained. I dreamed last night that I gave you my right—iron hand—which you held and grasped so tight, that you dragged it off roughly by the wrist. I was affrighted, and suddenly awoke. But had my sleep continued, I should have further dreamed that, in the place of this cold,

lifeless hand, you set me on a new and quickened one, as you have done this day. You must now away—your castle and possessions will require all your care for a brief time. The accursed life at court, and your long absence have, doubtless, sadly wasted them. Here comes my wife—she must be made to share our joy——

(*Enter ELISABETH.*)

ELISABETH.

You all look strangely at me! Is there aught amiss?

BERLICHINGEN.

Nothing amiss, dear wife;—you have but to pray God to bless your sister, and my friend. They stand there plighted to each other.

ELISABETH.

So soon!

BERLICHINGEN.

Yet not unexpected——

ELISABETH.

No—not unexpected—I could have well forgot it. Count Weislingen, may you always love

my sister as you love her now, and make her happy as she deserves to be.

WEISLINGEN.

God grant I may! My life would else be worthless!

BERLICHINGEN (*to ELISABETH and MARIE.*)

A passing cloud must for a time obscure our happiness. Adelbert sets out at once for Bamberg.

MARIE.

Again to Bamberg!

BERLICHINGEN.

Yes, we have both determined on it. A free knight should never hold a doubtful course. He is openly to break the band asunder between him and the Lord Bishop, and then give thought to other matters, which concern him yet more nearly. He must form new connexions with princes and with barons, whom till now he has regarded with a hostile eye. With my friends he can meet no hesitation—for at my word, their castle gates will all be open to him. But with others, it may be different. He must, too, wrest from the hands of faithless and rapacious stewards his long misused estates, and prosecute his

claim to some contested services. Then will he quick return—but come, sister,—come, Elisabeth, his page has, doubtless, now been fed and rested—and should speak with him.

WEISLINGEN.

Will you not stay to hear the news from Bamberg?

BERLICHINGEN.

I care not for it. Suabia and Franconia, now are you nearer allied than ever!

[*Exit with* ELISABETH.

MARIE.

We shall see you at dinner, Adelbert?

WEISLINGEN.

Before, dear Marie—in half an hour—till then farewell—

MARIE.

Farewell!

[*Exit.*

WEISLINGEN (*alone.*)

Alas! 'twas easy, Berlichingen, to perceive constraint in my demeanour, which seemed to say that something yet was wanting to my happiness! Be-

fore you, I must ever feel my utter—utter baseness! An accursed word—but 'tis well suited to me now. The hand of fate is on me—I am entangled in the snare into which I have ever fallen, and though my struggles may be hard, I must sink still deeper—deeper. And then back again to Bamberg! Is there no help—no hope? There can be none—I am like a child who in a fit of wayward passion has dashed some costly bauble to the earth, and then stands weeping over its shattered fragments!

(*Enter FRANZ.*)

FRANZ.

God save you, my noble Lord! I am here again to serve you, and bring so many greetings with me that I scarce know where I shall begin. From the Lord Bishop to the Fool with his cap and bells, greets you the Court; and from the Burgomaster to the Night-watch greets you the city.

WEISLINGEN.

You are welcome Franz;—but bring you nothing more?

FRANZ.

You are so high in the esteem and thoughts of all, that I can find no words to tell you.

E

WEISLINGEN.

So great favour will hardly endure long.

FRANZ.

Long as you live, my Lord; and after your death it will glitter in gilded letters upon your monument. There was general grief and consternation when it was first known you were a prisoner.

WEISLINGEN.

What said the Bishop?

FRANZ.

He was eager to know, and his questions came so fast upon each other, that he gave me no time to answer. The news was brought him before I got to Bamberg, by Farber, the man-at-arms who escaped so well at Haslach. But he would be told all that had befallen you since you parted from him, and inquired with anxious fear, if in the struggle you were wounded. I at last found room to say, that you were safe and well—unhurt in body, and composed in mind; and I then related with what knightly courtesy you were entreated here by Berlichingen. To that he answered not a word, but suddenly, with grave and distant mien, he signed me to withdraw.

WEISLINGEN.

And bring you nothing more?

FRANZ.

The next day I obtained an audience of the Marshal of the Court. I begged permission to return, and said that I would gladly be the bearer of despatches to my master, who would as gladly welcome them. The Marshal briefly answered—"We send no letters to your Lord, because we trust not Berlichingen, who can well put on the show of truth and courtesy, but whose heart is false and treacherous."

WEISLINGEN.

They know him ill.

FRANZ.

"Yet," went he on to say, "we all rejoice that your good Lord is entertained at Jaxthausen as becomes a knight. Bid him be sure that our endeavours to release him from captivity will be strenuous and impatient, because we are unable here to act without him."

WEISLINGEN.

They must learn to do so, shortly.



FRANZ.

What do you mean, my Lord?

WEISLINGEN.

Things are greatly changed, Franz. Without the endeavours of my friends, so *strenuous and impatient*, my captivity is at an end, and if it please me, I may to-day ride freely forth for Bamberg.

FRANZ.

I pray you then, my Lord, let us set out at once.

WEISLINGEN.

To-morrow, early in the morning, we shall set out, but our sojourn at Bamberg must be brief.

FRANZ.

Our sojourn at Bamberg must be brief! Ah, my Lord, could you but know what I have known—did you but even dream of that which I have there beheld——

WEISLINGEN.

And what have you there beheld!

FRANZ.

The mere remembrance of it tingles in every vein! Bamberg is no more Bamberg. An angel—

a sorceress in a woman's form has enchanted and bewildered all our senses, and made us believe that we were dwelling in the courts of heaven!

WEISLINGEN.

A woman has done all this!

FRANZ.

By Heaven, my Lord, I will become a priest, if when you see her, you are not beside yourself!

WEISLINGEN.

Who is she then?

FRANZ.

Adelheid von Walldorf.

WEISLINGEN.

Adelheid von Walldorf! I have heard much of her beauty.

FRANZ.

Heard of her beauty! you might say as well that you had seen soft music. No words can paint the charm of such alluring loveliness. In her presence I stood entranced—bewildered—fascinated!

WEISLINGEN.

You talk like one bereft of reason.

FRANZ.

I may well do so—the last time that I saw her, my reason had no power to guide my wandering thoughts and speech. I felt as I have heard of holy saints in the moment of a revelation of the Divinity—every sense stronger—higher—more perfect, and yet the use of none!

WEISLINGEN.

That is strange.

FRANZ.

It was evening—I went to take my leave of the Lord Bishop, and the Lady Adelheid was sitting with him at a game of chess. He was very gracious to me—gave me his hand to kiss—and said a world of pleasant things, of which I could hear nothing. I gazed at but one object—and that was passing beautiful! Her hand was laid upon the king's knight, which she was about to move, and I would have given my existence to have been, but for one moment, that senseless piece of ivory! Her eyes were cast upon the chess-board, but enough of their thrilling lustre escaped beneath the long silken lashes, which so delicately fringed them. The rounded symmetry and unspotted whiteness of her bosom, with its

gentle throbbing, could all be seen through the transparent veil that scarcely covered it, while her dark shining hair fell in rich clusters on her neck, and shaded part of that beauty which 'twas maddening thus to stand and look upon!

WEISLINGEN.

You are become a poet, Franz.

FRANZ.

I felt then as I have heard a poet feels in the moment of his wildest frenzy. When the Bishop had made an end of his courtly speeches, she suddenly turned her eyes full in my face, and said:—"Take also a greeting from me to your Lord,—one who desires his welfare though unknown to him. Tell him that new friends here look for his quick return; who yet can scarce expect him to set value on their proffered friendship, since he already is so rich in that which has been long and surely tried." I strove to answer, but my tongue was motionless. As I stood thus silent and bewildered, the Bishop carelessly threw down a pawn beneath the table at which they sat. I stooped to pick it up, and in the hasty gesture, my face was for an instant pressed against her soft, warm hand, which then was resting

idly at her side. The touch darted through every nerve and vein like lightning, and I know not how I left the hall of presence.

WEISLINGEN.

Is her husband at the court?

FRANZ.

She has been four months a widow, and to divert her melancholy thoughts is now at Bamberg. She also seeks the Bishop's aid against old Wildenholz, who has seized some of her dead Lord's estates. You will see her soon.

WEISLINGEN.

Her influence over me, can be but faint.

FRANZ.

It is then true, what I heard whispered in the servants' hall—you are affianced to the Lady Marie?

WEISLINGEN.

'Tis even so, and I have too thrown off all dependence on the Bishop. I soon shall bid good night to Bamberg, and hasten to the new day which opens here so brightly for me. Quick, make ready for our journey!—first for the Bishop's court, and

then to my own castle in Franconia. I would not stay at Bamberg though your enticing Lady Adelheid herself, should wind her arms about me, and strive to hold me back in her embraces! [*Exit.*]

FRANZ (*alone.*)

Let him once reach the Bishop's court, and his return need not be cared for. The Lady Marie is most fair—even beautiful—I cannot blame my Lord that in his wearisome captivity he should have fancied that he loved. Her soft blue eyes are full of tenderness and sympathetic melancholy, and he is always ready to be won by such looks in women. But with thee, Adelheid, is an atmosphere of life—deep-stirring beauty—burning desire and delight!—I would—I am a fool, and every glance from her makes me the more so. My Lord must to Bamberg—I must to Bamberg, and there will I gaze upon her till my madness pass away, or be confirmed forever! [*Exit.*]

## SCENE II.—SALOON AT JAXTHAUSEN.

HANS VON SELBIZ, CARL.

CARL.

How shall I name you to my mother, noble Sir?

SELBIZ.

Say that Hans von Selbiz sends his greeting to her.

CARL.

Hans von——

SELBIZ.

Hans with a wooden leg—Hans without care—or as you will, my whitehaired boy.

CARL.

These are merry names;—you are welcome, Sir, to Jaxthausen. [*Exit.*

SELBIZ (*alone.*)

The old house looks just as it did ten years ago. There hang the cross-bows—there stand the well known silver goblets, which I so oft have emptied—



and there is the same worm-eaten tapestry. My homestead is drear and desolate, compared with this—'tis hard work for me to shift along from day to day. Things, too, grow worse and worse, and but for the timely quarrel of Berlichingen with the long pursed Nurenbergers, I should have been at my extremity.—Here comes the thrifty housewife, to whom my lucky comrade owes all this comfort.

(*Enter ELISABETH.*)

ELISABETH.

Welcome, Selbiz! 'Tis long since we have seen you here at Jaxthausen.

SELBIZ.

For that, your husband saw me the oftener with him in the field. He soon, I hear, intends to sally out against the Nurenbergers—he does well. Those trafficking dogs were richly bribed by the lying Bamberg to betray the messenger who went between us, and they must now yield up their ill-gotten ducats, in fair requital of their treachery.

ELISABETH.

My Lord sent George to bring you news of his intention.

SELBIZ.

And I am here, ready to march with him at once. The boy he sent was a bold spirit—I saw him then for the first time.

ELISABETH.

Did he find you at your home?

SELBIZ.

I was close by, with a band of merry comrades.

ELISABETH.

Came the boy back with you hither?

SELBIZ.

He rode further.

ELISABETH.

I pray you lay aside your cloak.

SELBIZ.

I give you many thanks, but I had rather keep it, for the present.

ELISABETH.

Wherefore? Is the hall chilly?

SELBIZ.

Very chilly.

ELISABETH.

An old and hardy knight is shivering in a chamber!

SELBIZ.

I have some fashion of a fever.

ELISABETH.

It cannot be perceived.

SELBIZ.

To cover it, I wear my cloak.

ELISABETH.

The fever!

SELBIZ.

Shall I tell you why I wrap my cloak thus closely round me?

ELISABETH.

Without more ado.

SELBIZ (*throws off his cloak, and shows himself in a threadbare doublet without sleeves.*)

You see! I have been pillaged!

ELIZABETH.

Ey! ey! So true and bold a knight in such a doublet! What has done this!

SELBIZ.

A set of most accursed and treacherous comrades—but in revenge, I have them here, thrust in my pocket.

ELIZABETH.

You speak in figures.

SELBIZ.

No—they are all here, tumbled on each other.

ELISABETH.

That is a riddle.

SELBIZ.

The explanation is not hard to find. (*He throws a set of dice upon the table.*) You have it there.

ELISABETH.

Dice! Your old fault still masters you, Sir Hans.

SELBIZ.

As the thread is spun, so must it be drawn and woven. 'Tis now too late for me to work a change.

ELISABETH.

And yet your gaming leads to certain ruin.

SELBIZ.

It may do that, good wife; but now I hope for better times. As I sat yesterday half naked, in this doublet, twisting my white and scanty hair, and cursing from my heart those four cornered rascals there, came your brave George, and brought a welcome invitation from his Lord. I sprang up with joy, and, casting my cloak about me to conceal these gaping wounds of poverty, I hastened hither, and now shall we soon have money and garments, and rings and jewels in abundance.

ELISABETH.

But before you get them?

SELBIZ.

I must find credit somewhere. My order on the Burgomaster of Nurenberg should be worth money.

ELISABETH (*laughing.*)

Without your order on the Burgomaster, our stores are open to you, and they are well supplied.

SELBIZ.

Careful housewife!

ELISABETH.

Speak freely what you want, Sir Hans.

SELBIZ.

About as much as a child newly brought into this growling world.

ELISABETH.

All that you want is yours.

SELBIZ.

Not so.—Set a fair value on that which I may take, and out of my first winnings from the Nurembergers you shall be paid——

ELISABETH (*laughing.*)

So careful among friends!

SELBIZ.

A true knight receives not a gift—he must deserve all he receives.

ELISABETH.

And I can make no bargain with my friend.

SELBIZ.

Then must I fight in this poor doublet.

ELISABETH.

Go to!

SELBIZ.

I've found a way which may compose our diffi-

culty. Let us throw dice for all that I shall need. If the die be in my favour, then have I fairly won what you now offer; but if it be against me, then must you take my order on the Burgomaster. Come, and begin.

ELISABETH.

A true knight receives not a gift, and a careful housewife gambles not with dice.

SELBIZ.

Then lay a wager with me—a careful housewife may do that.

ELISABETH.

A wager,—good; let me hear what you can propose——

SELBIZ.

If our attempt upon the purses of these slippery Nurenbergers miscarry through treachery or bad fortune, and we return no richer than we went—then have I lost.

ELISABETH (*laughing.*)

Your wager, good Sir Hans, is little better than the throw of dice. But let it stand—you need not fear to be a loser.



SELBIZ.

At all events, from this fair chance, I may hope to win enough to pay for a new doublet.

ELISABETH.

So poor a pittance will be hardly won, since you must wrest it from your enemies sword in hand.

SELBIZ.

Our enemies, trusty wife, differ but little from our other comrades. To-day they fight with us—to-morrow drink with us—and the next day they forget us. Your husband comes this way—he seems in haste.

ELISABETH.

No more than he is wont—I'll leave you with him, while I go to make you ready for the Nurembergers. [Exit.

*(Enter BERLICHINGEN.)*

BERLICHINGEN.

God save you, Selbiz! my well tried friend! You are here in answer to my call, like a prompt and faithful knight. But, old Camerad, what means this tattered doublet?

SELBIZ.

You praise my promptness, and it should be praised, for a halting wooden leg like this, is sore against it. My haste to join you here, left me no time to change my doublet, so I am come without one.

BERLICHINGEN.

You shall have all of mine.

SELBIZ.

Your thrifty wife has gone to fetch me one. How happens it that the gallant boy who brought your message, rode further when he left me? We may need his service in our new adventure.

BERLICHINGEN.

I trust him altogether, and have sent him secretly to Bamberg, with a message to Count Weislingen—

SELBIZ.

With whom, I hear, you are but newly reconciled. I am glad of it, though 'twould seem your friendship was renewed a little of a sudden.

BERLICHINGEN.

And yet it was most natural to renew it. A

strange affection for him was born with me—though he deserted me so wrongfully, I could not hate him for it. He was the companion of my childhood—the friend of my early days—his name and image were always with me—when I lost him, I lost part of myself, which I longed incessantly to find again. He, too, felt the same, and soon as we met, our interrupted harmony was restored, the past forgotten, and then were we happy and confiding as before.

SELBIZ.

What aid has he promised you in this affair with Nurenberg, and in those which cannot fail to follow?

BERLICHINGEN.

He will break off from all who are my open enemies—for that purpose he is now at Bamberg. I have at my disposal his influence with the Emperor and the Imperial Diet; but with our brave and faithful followers, we will alone maintain our separate quarrels. This have we both agreed.

(*Enter FAUD.*)

FAUD.

My Lord, your men-at-arms are waiting for their orders.

BERLICHINGEN.

So soon returned, my trusty Camerad! How many have you got together?

FAUD.

Twenty horsemen, and as many foot soldiers. I bring you, too, the news, that the caravan from Nurenberg, is already on its march.

SELBIZ.

They have set out betimes.

BERLICHINGEN (*to FAUD.*)

What escort have they?

FAUD.

Ten Bamberg horsemen.

BERLICHINGEN.

Away, then, to inspect their merchandise! This blow will be two handed, Selbiz. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.—A FOREST NEAR FRANKFURT.

## TWO NURENBERG MERCHANTS.

## FIRST MERCHANT.

Shall we rest awhile here in this pleasant shade?  
The wagons mount the hill but slowly.

## SECOND MERCHANT.

I am content. (*Seating themselves.*) We are now close upon Frankfurt, without mischance or even alarm. How well could we have spared the charge and trouble of these noisy horsemen, who have devoured all our stores, and whose hire we were compelled to pay before hand.

## FIRST MERCHANT.

Our merchandise is too costly to expose to any risk. The times are full of danger, and, moreover, it was wise in us to show the value that we set upon the Lord Bishop's favour, in choosing his retainers for our escort, when he is again at open war with the lawless Berlichingen 'Twas worth twice the money.

SECOND MERCHANT (*starting up.*)

Look there, below!—see! What is that! Holy

God! horsemen are dashing through the forest! Now they assail our escort—they make no resistance, and give up their swords at once—traitors! cowards! Now they stop the wagons—robbers! We are lost!

FIRST MERCHANT (*seizing him.*)

Down and be silent! Your clamour will destroy our last remaining chance. Close! and we may save our ransom. If taken, we shall indeed be ruined!

[*They conceal themselves behind the trees.*

(*Enter GEORGE, on the back ground.*)

GEORGE.

My Lord should not be far from here. The caravan was scarce an hour's march before me.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Alas! your silly uproar has destroyed us! Here comes a soldier on our right. We are discovered!

SECOND MERCHANT.

No—look! He is not with the robbers—his arms are different. Speak to him—help may be nearer than we think.

FIRST MERCHANT.

What seek you, noble Sir?

GEORGE.

Not *noble Sir*, my friend. I have no claim to titles, so I pray you give me none. I seek a cavalcade of knights and horsemen—have they ridden past you?

FIRST MERCHANT.

You have but to look below,—there they plunder our wagons, and take from us all our living! Help us worthy young man—we'll fill your hands with gold. You must have comrades with you, and if you are outnumbered, some stratagem may save us.

GEORGE (*aside.*)

'Tis he himself. (*To the Merchants.*) I am alone, and can do nothing with so many.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Then guard the path behind us, but for a moment. We can soon get out upon the high road above, and raise the country on the robbers.

[*The Merchants attempt to make off.*]GEORGE (*drawing his sword.*)

Stand on your lives! He who stirs is dead upon the spot! You are the prisoners of my noble master, Götz von Berlichingen!



## FIRST MERCHANT.

Götz von Berlichingen! Then we are undone!

## GEORGE.

Yes, my worthy masters, Götz von Berlichingen, with the Iron Hand—whose messenger you first entrapped, and then betrayed to his mortal enemy the false Lord Bishop of Bamberg. You are now in his power, and here he comes to settle with you.

*(Enter BERLICHINGEN with FAUD and Men-at-Arms.)*

## BERLICHINGEN.

Search the forest through—they must be hidden somewhere, for they mounted by the footpath but to avoid the sun. We are so near to Frankfurt, that one escape might bring a thousand bellowing burgers at our heels——

GEORGE *(advancing.)*

My Lord, the work is done—here are your prisoners.

## BERLICHINGEN.

Brave boy! You alone! welcome, welcome, a thousand times. *(To FAUD.)* Take them with the rest. Keep strict watch—remember, the strictest

watch. (*Exit FAUD, with Merchants and Men-at-Arms.*) And now, good George, speak! What bring you? What does Weislingen? Found you him at his castle? Are you returned safe and well?

GEORGE.

My Lord, give me a moment's time. I bring no joyful news.

BERLICHINGEN.

No joyful news! How?

GEORGE.

My Lord, hear me from the beginning. In obedience to your orders I wore the arms and doublet of a Bamberg soldier. I played the part boldly, and served as escort to some Reineck peasants up to the Main itself.

BERLICHINGEN.

In the Bamberg armour! That was too daring.

GEORGE.

So I believe, now that 'tis done: but he who thinks before hand on the danger of an enterprise, will scarce conduct it well. I found not Count Weislingen at his castle.

BERLICHINGEN.

I said you would not; he had much to do at the Lord Bishop's court. You then set out for Bamberg.

GEORGE.

I did—still in the Bamberg armour.

BERLICHINGEN.

You were again too daring.

GEORGE.

It fell not out so. In Bamberg I soon heard that the Lord Bishop and Count Weislingen were firmer friends than ever. There was, too, great talk among the people of a marriage between him and Adelheid, the widow of your kinsman the old Baron of Walldorf.

BERLICHINGEN.

The talk was idle.

GEORGE.

You have yet more to hear. I ventured into the Palace of the Lord Bishop, and saw your friend lead down the Lady Adelheid to dinner. She is beautiful—by that burning sun above us—she is beautiful! We all bowed ourselves before her, and when she thanked us, her voice and smile won every

heart. Count Weislingen walked at her side—the fire of love was glittering in his eyes. The crowd made way before them, and murmured as they passed, “God bless them! a graceful pair!”

BERLICHINGEN.

That was not well.

GEORGE.

I waited and watched for him till he came forth from dinner. He was alone—so I approached and said—I am the bearer of a message from Götz von Berlichingen. He started at my words, as if they were some fatal summons, and I read the avowal of his guilt in his changing countenance. He was afraid to look at me—even at me, a poor and humble page!

BERLICHINGEN.

Speak on—let me be the judge alone!

GEORGE.

“You wear the Bamberg armour,” said he, bewildered. I answered straight—I am the bearer of a message from Götz von Berlichingen, and must speak with you in private. “Come to me in the night,” he said, and then he left the hall in haste.

BERLICHINGEN.

And went you to him in the night?

GEORGE.

I went and waited two, long, anxious hours in his antichamber. The silken pages there whispered together, and watched me from every side, till I thought I was betrayed. At last they brought me to him. Then I gave your greeting and your message, and saw that they were both unwelcome. At the first, he strove to put me off with flattering, empty words. But when he found I spoke too plainly for his purpose, he suddenly threw all disguise aside, and commanded me to return at once to him who sent me. "Tell your Lord," he said, "that the next time he shall make a prisoner of his enemy, it will be wise to hold him faster. He assailed my followers and seized my person as I was travelling without suspicion upon the high road of the empire. I owe him then no duty, and have broken no pledge, save that which was extorted from me in captivity. That pledge I now take back, and separate myself from him and from his violent deeds forever."

BERLICHINGEN.

And this you had from his own mouth?

GEORGE.

Yet more, my Lord—by Heaven! he threatened me!

BERLICHINGEN.

Enough—this too has fallen upon me——God!

GEORGE.

My Lord! look not so wildly! Think no more upon the traitor and his treachery. I repent me now that I have so unwisely told you all——

BERLICHINGEN.

Why is it, that when we have yielded to the holiest feelings of our nature, we should be thus deceived and shamed—while he who breaks his word and violates his plighted faith, finds favour and applause in the base triumph? Weislingen is now the crafty, skilful politician—the world praises—honours him. He has drawn himself safe from the net, which was so strongly cast about him, and he may turn and smile, as we stand here, gazing in weak confusion at the empty knots before us!

GEORGE.

My Lord, your presence may be needed with the prisoners and the booty—my Lord—I say the prisoners and the booty!

BERLICHINGEN.

The only prisoner that I made with joy is fled and gone—the only booty that I cared for—the heart of an old friend—is lost forever! I held it but a moment in my hands——

GEORGE.

Forget him—he is not worth remembrance.

BERLICHINGEN.

No—I will not forget him—I will not forget his broken word! No more can I believe in truth or virtue—no more shall I attempt to bind my fellow man by promise or by oath. All who henceforth come into my power shall be made to feel it. They shall be guarded with a tyrant's watchfulness—no prayers—no tears—no damned, smiling treachery shall ever free them!

*(Enter FAUD, hastily.)*

FAUD.

My Lord, punish, but forgive us! The merchants have escaped!

BERLICHINGEN.

Quick! pursue them! Shoot them down with your



cross-bows—let them not get off alive. Quick, I say. (*Exit FAUD.*) Fetter all the rest—closely fetter them—and wait upon the heath there my orders for their death.

GEORGE.

But, my good Lord——

BERLICHINGEN.

Obey my order! (*Exit GEORGE.*) These base born pedlars shall suffer for the crime and falsehood of their betters, and I shall have some vengeance in their terror and despair. 'Twould be well to pause—I am sore beset—darkness and calamity are gathering fast about me—yet thus far, my soul has not been stained with guilt before its Maker. Then shed not now the innocent blood! It cries to heaven—and its cry is heard even at the throne of God himself! Yon trembling wretches have already lost that which they value next their lives—they have paid enough—paid dearly for all the evil they would have done me. Shall I too brand as ruffians and as murderers my brave associates in the holy struggle for our liberty? It must not be—so let them live. But why, Marie, is thy gentle form presented to me now? Thy tender, mournful eyes are fixed on

mine, and seem to ask for him who was affianced to thee. Before thee must I appear with grief and bitterness—my hasty confidence has made thee, fair, innocent victim, unhappy for thy life—aye, unhappy for thy life! Alas! and in this moment thou knowest not what awaits thee—thou knowest not what has here been done! Thou art now watching for thy brother to return and bring thee news of him, to whom, in an accursed hour, thou hast given thy first—thy purest love. Thy brother will return—but thy lover, never! never! unless I drag him after me in chains, and cast him at thy feet, but to increase thy sorrow and thy misery—ill-fated child! What, Berlichingen, tears! Remember, there is now no time for tears. (*Enter GEORGE.*) Bid Faud conduct the Bamberg horsemen, with a guard of twenty-men, to Jaxthausen, and wait there my further orders. Take you the other twenty, and march the tradesmen back on the road to Nurenberg—a league or two hence, set them all at liberty—the merchandise we have seized shall be their ransom. Selbiz and myself—

GEORGE (*seizing his hand and kissing it.*)

Thank Heaven, my Lord, you have not done it!

BERLICHINGEN.

Faithful boy! Your master's honour is dear to you as your own! What hold you there so tightly in your hand?

GEORGE.

'Tis a casket of jewels. Among the prisoners is a gallant youth from Rheinfels, who, as we were about to bind him, drew forth this casket from his bosom, and said, "take this for my ransom, and let me go. 'Tis a bridal present which I was bearing to my mistress at the Frankfurt fair."

BERLICHINGEN.

A bridal present!

GEORGE.

He said yet more: "She is the daughter of my father's oldest friend; we have known each other from our childish days, and she was soon to be my wife. Take the jewels, they are of the finest water, and are for me a costly ransom. I pray you take them, and let me go."

BERLICHINGEN.

And did you let him go?

GEORGE.

God forbid! We bound him fast—such was your order—and here have I brought the jewels, as the richest part of all the booty.

BERLICHINGEN.

Let me look at them.

GEORGE.

There, my Lord!

BERLICHINGEN (*looking at the jewels.*)

Alas! poor Marie, I can have no temptation to bring these beautiful things to grace thy nuptials! He who should have been thy husband hath faithlessly abandoned thee, to riot in the arms of a lascivious leman! Yet, gentle, noble spirit, even in thy tears and silent, lonely sorrow, wouldst thou rejoice to make others happy round thee! So then, with thy soul, let me now act. Here, George! take back the casket to the gallant youth from Rheinfels. Bid him hasten with it to his bride, and bring her too a greeting from the iron handed Berlichingen.

[*Exit* GEORGE. BERLICHINGEN *covers his face with his hands.*]

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—AUGSBURG—THE HOTEL OF THE BISHOP OF  
BAMBERG.

WEISLINGEN, ADELHEID.

WEISLINGEN.

Still the same weariness and discontent.

ADELHEID.

Time drags heavily—I am restless as one in a  
slow fever.

WEISLINGEN.

Am I to believe that you are tired of my love?

ADELHEID.

Not of your love, but of this *habit* of daily, hourly  
seeing you. I could wish you were again at Jaxt-  
hausen, with the iron handed Berlichingen, where,  
you say, you would have been had I not held you  
back.

WEISLINGEN.

It is too late for fruitless wishes!

ADELHEID.

*Too late*—you have said truly. Before I knew you, Weislingen, I heard many talk of you, and their report was such as gave me a strange—unused desire to see you. That desire——

WEISLINGEN.

'Twere well, perhaps, you had not seen me.

ADELHEID.

No—Adelbert, for you won my love.

WEISLINGEN.

'Twould seem so.

ADELHEID.

It was as it seemed. But full soon there came a withering change. The bold and practised statesman—the ruling spirit in all affairs of weight and moment, was by some malign touch, transformed into a sighing poet, listless and melancholy as a love-sick maiden—sunken so low in apathy and indolence, that every call of interest and of honour passed unheeded! I felt the change—how deeply,

you should know. Yet, with a woman's weakness, I fondly hoped that in a love like mine there dwelt a power to rouse you from this fatal torpor. My hope was vain—I should have spared my prayers and tears—they cannot move you: and now here in Augsburg, where you are summoned to this session of the Imperial Diet—so full of interest to all of Germany—you still hang about my garments—linger in my bed chamber—slumber on my bosom, till I believe with shame, that I have given my ardent love to one who has no claim to keep it. You are no more the man to whom I gave my love.

WEISLINGEN.

Then let me go.

ADELHEID.

I have done you wrong—this outward apathy but conceals the workings of a hidden purpose.

WEISLINGEN.

You are bitter, Adelheid—you know what is my purpose.

ADELHEID.

'Tis far from its accomplishment. Nature seems accursed in wasting her choicest gifts on one who knows not how to use them!



WEISLINGEN.

'Twere better we should part.

ADELHEID.

Stay till all hope be lost, that our parting then may be forever! Gaze not so strangely and so sternly at me. Clasp your hand once more in mine, and forgive what I have said in sorrow and in love.

WEISLINGEN.

Sorceress!

ADELHEID.

Play the child no longer, and the scene will soon be changed. Should you be here among the Barons of the Empire, with all your talent and your power, the object of their pity and their sneers—the charm of your life destroyed by the open threats and scorn of a vindictive enemy?

WEISLINGEN.

Help me, then, you who sway my spirit at your will! Fate hath plunged me into a dark—unknown abyss—I see the blessed light of heaven above me, but I strive in vain to reach it.

ADELHEID.

You shall soon be free, if you but dare to be so—

your fears confine you—nothing else. How long will you endure the life of one who hath come fiercely forth to fasten insult and reproach upon your name? Who, in the face of all your peers proclaims that you have done him deep wrong, and like a recreant fled—not from his revenge—but from his threatened chastisement! Who, even now, makes wanton havoc of your fair estates, and murders your defenceless vassals! You owe all this to Berlichingen—and yet you calmly bear it!

WEISLINGEN.

Should you be the judge between us?

ADELHEID.

And of me—the widow of his kinsman, Walldorf, and the wedded wife of the *powerful* Count Weislingen—of me—how does he speak?

WEISLINGEN.

Urge no more—I know what is before me, and if I have shown doubt or fear to meet the task, it is because some lingerings of truth and virtue still faintly struggle with an evil influence which leads me on to shame and ruin! Nay, frown not with such scorn—your will shall be accomplished, that I may once again behold in those dark, gleaming

eyes the kindling glances of consenting love. Here I bid farewell to gentleness and mercy—to all my early friendship and to every pleasant image of my childish days—memory no longer shall have aught of joy or grief for me. And now, away over the wild sea of passion and revenge! Let the ship dash upon the rocks, or drive a helpless wreck before the storm—it matters not. The cup of life will soon be drained of all its pleasure, and then, with one brief struggle, 'twill be well to sink to darkness and to rest!

## ADELHEID.

You seem like one who has burst suddenly from the deep slumber of the grave! A fire is in your eyes I never saw before. Come, Adelbert, now quick to the Lord Bishop, and with him to the assembled Diet. Remember, victory is a fickle woman—the prompt and bold alone can win her!

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.—IMPERIAL GARDENS AT AUGSBURG.

THE BISHOP OF BAMBERG *in conference with the*  
EMPEROR.

BISHOP.

Your majesty broke up the Diet yesterday in haste, and many of your faithful servants feared it was a token of displeasure.

EMPEROR.

It was—should we sit there to hear naught but murmurs of discontent and loud complaints of deeds of violence without the power to interpose and end them? The petty quarrels and dissensions of our Barons distract each session of the Diet, while against the deadly foe of Christendom, who now so fiercely threatens us with all his power, not one of you will stir a finger! Your trusted friend, Count Weislingen, chose no fitting time to bring before us the petition of those Nurenberg tradesmen who alleged that they were plundered by Selbiz and Berlichingen; and yet you all, with one accord, maintained that they should have the full redress they prayed for.

BISHOP.

Our gracious sovereign would not require us to march against a foreign enemy, and leave our homes to the assaults of desperate marauders? We upheld the just complaint of Nurenberg, because the reckless Berlichingen is the leader of a band of men whose long-continued outrage and defiance of all law and civil power, have now produced the evil which your majesty must charge to them alone. Every sword is needed in the daily conflict with these daring freebooters. Their strength is great enough to make them formidable, even to the united forces of the empire, and till they are dispersed and overthrown, disunion and delay must reign in all our counsels. But soon as their rebellious violence is repressed and punished, your majesty will see throughout our Father-land one bold and free array of valiant soldiers, eager to meet the infidel invaders who deride our faith and trample on the Holy Cross!

EMPEROR.

Do you believe it?

BISHOP.

It must be so. Suabia and Franconia alone yield open countenance and support to these disturbers of

the public peace, and even there, many of the nobles and the people long for tranquillity. Were Selbiz and Berlichingen once disposed of, all their adherents would separate like a herd of startled deer, and return to their allegiance without a struggle.

## EMPEROR.

Berlichingen is a true and noble knight. Many of his rash and violent deeds have been forced upon him by the wrongs and evil practices of those who now pursue him with such bitter enmity. We should be mild and gentle with him in this hour of need, that we may win his bold and warlike arm to strike with us in the coming contest, which will, in truth, require our utmost strength.

## BISHOP.

Your majesty has been told that Berlichingen's name now sounds through Germany as the protector of the poor and the oppressed. Even his crippled arm has aided to increase his influence with the peasantry, for the iron hand he wears upon it is become among them a sign of wonder and of reverence. They listen with blind credulity to stories of his strength and daring valour. The most cruel of his actions seem praiseworthy in their eyes. His

orders act like a charm upon their boorish wills, and even——

EMPEROR.

A subject, my Lord of Bamberg, whose ambition has such power to be dangerous to his Sovereign should be attempted with fair and peaceful measures before he is unwisely driven to extremity.

BISHOP.

Force can alone avail to quell the spirit of rebellion which by the machinations of these recreant nobles is spread so widely through the lower orders. Discord and civil war, with their train of suffering and calamity is the sad alternative. The fire is smothered now, soon to burst forth in wild and sweeping conflagration! Yet at this crisis, one bold step may serve to quench it; and the recent pillage of the caravan of Nurenberg affords a fit occasion to lay the Ban upon the source and cause of all this evil.

EMPEROR.

Bring the complaint of Nurenberg before the Diet, at to-morrow's session. Let it be heard, and answered without strife or tumult; and if the outrage can be fairly proved, the heaviest punishment



shall fall upon the guilty. Our wishes have been unceasing for tranquillity and peace in our dominions; but an old age of trouble and of sorrow we fear will prove the only fruit of long and anxious efforts to promote the public good. The hand that has so often gently warned and spared, shall deal a withering blow, if it must strike at last!

BISHOP.

Your majesty will have a warm response from many grateful hearts, for this last token of most gracious favour. The storm which hangs upon our borders may prove the herald of a dawn of light which shall increase in brightness till every cloud be swept away, and a calm sun of happiness and fortune shine upon us!

EMPEROR.

Attend us to the palace.

[*Exeunt.*]

---

SCENE III.—AUGSBURG.

*The Hotel of the BISHOP OF BAMBERG.*

ADELHEID (*reading a letter.*)

This is my work—I have found it well to be

beautiful—the smiles of friends and fortune have ever been around my path. (*Reads.*) “*The Ban is laid at last on Wildenholz and Berlichingen—troops are ordered to march forthwith against them. His Majesty was pleased to bid me choose the command of one of the detachments, and I shall soon be in pursuit of the bold spoiler of your endowed estates. Franz stays but to bid you for me—farewell!*” So, Adelbert, your fear to meet old Berlichingen face to face—yet are you bold enough. You fear to meet me, too,—and here comes the dark eyed Franz to make his Lord’s excuses.

(*Enter FRANZ.*)

FRANZ.

Most gracious Lady——

ADELHEID.

How fares your master?

FRANZ.

Well, though sad to be thus parted from you.

ADELHEID.

Who has the command against Berlichingen?

FRANZ.

Count Werdenhagen--farewell, best and most gracious Lady, I must follow my Lord in haste.

ADELHEID.

You should eat and rest before you go—the march will be a long and weary one.

FRANZ.

I do not fear it—you have admitted me to see you, and I can neither tire nor hunger.

ADELHEID.

Bring you no parting message from my Lord?

FRANZ (*hesitating.*)

He commanded me—to kiss your hand.

ADELHEID.

There—your lips are warm, Sir Franz!

FRANZ.

My heart is yet warmer—I tremble—(*aside.*) Your servants, dearest Lady, are too happy in being near you.

ADELHEID.

You are trembling Franz. The sudden departure

of your master, doubtless, required you to watch all night. An hour's sleep before you start is needful for you.

FRANZ.

Your kindness, gracious Lady, cares even for one obscure like me. *[Exit.*

ADELHEID.

That boy has formed a strange attachment to me; his eyes were filled with tears as he abruptly turned to leave the hall. Can it be? Yet no—poor child, he seldom dares to raise his glance to mine. The times are stirring as I could wish—another month, and all Germany will be filled with the tumultuous pomp of war. That month, it is most fitting I should pass retired at my husband's castle in Franconia. I am resolved—this very night will I set out from Augsburg to prepare in silence for the unknown events before me. *[Exit.*

## SCENE IV.—SALOON AT JAXTHAUSEN.

SICKINGEN, BERLICHINGEN.

BERLICHINGEN.

Your proposal startled me at first, dear Sickingen. Give me a moment to regain my self-possession.

SICKINGEN.

What time you will—but I repeat, that I am here to ask your noble sister's hand in marriage.

BERLICHINGEN.

I could have wished that you were sooner come. Now, I must conceal nothing from you. Weislingen in his captivity found means to win my sister's love, and I, confiding in his honour, gave her to him. Then I opened my castle gates and set my prisoner free. But he soon betrayed the friend who had so blindly trusted him! He hath forsaken Marie—fled from her true and pure affection to scenes of vice, and deeds of darkness and dishonour!

SICKINGEN.

Is that so?

BERLICHINGEN.

As I have said—and the poor maiden sits alone,  
and weeps over broken vows and disappointed hopes.

SICKINGEN.

We will turn her tears to smiles.

BERLICHINGEN.

What! would you wed one thus forsaken?

SICKINGEN.

She is not dishonoured in my eyes because she hastily confided in a villain. Weislingen has torn a double band asunder—'tis well indeed that you were not allied with such a traitor. Shall the gentle Marie bury her hopes and beauty in a cloister, because the first man whom she knew and loved has proved unworthy of her? No, my proposal is the same, and I shall proudly make her mistress of my castle and possessions!

BERLICHINGEN.

I have told you that she loved him.

SICKINGEN.

Think you so lowly of me that I should fear to

urge my suit against the mere remembrance of the faithless Weislingen? I am not over bold, yet do I hope an honest love like mine will not be offered to a heedless ear. Let us come where I may speak with Marie, and calm the doubts which now perplex my purpose. (*Voices without.*) What sudden noise is that?

BERLICHINGEN.

I hear the voice of Selbiz—Some pressing need has brought him back so soon to Jaxthausen.

(*Enter SELBIZ.*)

SELBIZ.

God save you, Berlichingen. Sickingen you are here in fitting time—your hand—I greet you both.

BERLICHINGEN.

To what good chance do we stand debtors for this visit, Selbiz?

SELBIZ.

Let me first draw a breath or two.

BERLICHINGEN.

Bring you bad news?



SELBIZ.

I bring bad news. We have confided in the justice of our Sovereign, and now we are repaid in royal coin, for such becoming confidence as faithful subjects.

BERLICHINGEN.

Speak out the worst.

SELBIZ.

The Ban of the Empire is laid upon you—your Castle given up to plunder, and your body to be devoured by birds and beasts of prey!

BERLICHINGEN.

The Ban of the Empire! Then am I publicly proclaimed a bandit, heretic and traitor!

SICKINGEN.

Why do you dwell upon those names? You know that they are used in form, and are but empty sounds. Some plotting enemy has contrived this blow to crush you, and nothing now remains but to prepare and meet it with defiance.

SELBIZ.

You have no time to lose. The Imperial troops

headed by the hot-brained Werdenhagen had instant orders to march against you. They think to take you unawares, but a party of my horsemen, whom I despatched, as we agreed, to watch the motions of the Nurenbergers, made prisoner of a scout four hours ago, and brought him in with haste. He disclosed without a question, the plans and numbers of these hireling foes, because forsooth he thought we should be frightened to submission! They count eight hundred strong, and this very night you may expect them here before your castle gates. My followers are all in arms and wait your orders.

SICKINGEN.

And mine shall be encamped in Jaxthausen when the sun sinks behind these battlements. You said well, old Selbiz, that I was here in fitting time.

BERLICHINGEN.

Hold, Sickingen! I cannot now receive the aid you offer, nor should I longer listen to your proposal for my sister's hand. Danger is thick around me, and my friends must not be mingled in it.

SICKINGEN.

You have had reason, Berlichingen, to know me

better. Your words are such as I had never thought to hear from you!

## BERLICHINGEN.

Nay, misconceive me not, dear Franz. I have used such words, because you may befriend me with effect hereafter, if you shun all concern in this dispute, which threatens more than I need fear from it. I shall beat back the inexperienced Werdenhagen and his hireling soldiers; or if I fail, the worst that can befall me, is to be made a prisoner. You are high in favour with the Emperor, and have both friends and influence in the Diet, which can serve me better than a thousand of your men-at-arms. While open, inconsiderate succour from you now, would scarce avail me aught, and might plunge us both in helpless ruin. Upon condition that you yield to these my reasons, I promise to advance your suit beside my sister, and shall with joy unite myself so nearly to a man whom I have trusted often, and who has never yet betrayed me.

## SICKINGEN.

I yield at once—yet before we part, I fain would speak with the gentle Marie and learn her thoughts of one, who has known and loved her long and well.

Then, whatever be her answer, I shall bid farewell to Jaxthausen, and send you here at sunset a hundred of my horsemen. I must not be hindered—without my arms or banner they cannot be known. Remember you count but few against so many.

BERLICHINGEN.

One wolf will drive before him a whole herd of timorous, flying sheep;—but I accept your offer, and there you have my hand to thank you for it. I left my wife and sister on the terrace—will you seek them while I talk with Selbiz?

SICKINGEN.

My words with Marie shall be brief—I doubt my fortune, now that I hasten to decide it. [*Exit.*]

BERLICHINGEN.

Why have you stood thus silent Selbiz?

SELBIZ.

I could say nothing.

BERLICHINGEN.

What think you of my conduct with Franz Sickingen?

SELBIZ.

That we must fight the harder for it.

BERLICHINGEN.

You like it not?

SELBIZ.

I like it well.

BERLICHINGEN.

Have you aught to say then to the Ban, so suddenly laid upon us?

SELBIZ.

It is a blow from the hand of Weislingen.

BERLICHINGEN.

Do you believe it?

SELBIZ.

I believe it not—I know it.

BERLICHINGEN.

How do you know it?

SELBIZ.

He was present at the Augsburg Diet, and brought before it a petition of the dastard Nurenbergers who

prayed the Ban against us. Carl Altenstein was there, and heard him.

BERLICHINGEN.

Well—then we are his debtors for yet more.

SELBIZ.

We are. (*Trumpet.*) My men-at-arms are filing through the court yard——

BERLICHINGEN.

Let us go down to meet them. My trusty Faud must have my orders to marshal all my followers—he will require but an hour at the farthest. Sickingen's re-inforcement shall stay behind to garrison the Castle, and at sunset my banner shall advance against the standard of the Empire! Selbiz, I have long expected that I should be driven to this last act, which brands me for a traitor—it was to be expected. But now, that the plotting of my deadly foes has arrayed me openly against my sovereign, I feel, I know that the fortune, and the honour of my life are marred forever! My little day of sunshine is gone and ended. The evening, which all would fain have calm and fair, lowers fiercely on me, and forbodes the coming tempest. It must soon o'er-

whelm me! My name and line shall be extinguished, and peace for me be found but in the silence and oblivion of the grave! (*Shouts in the court yard.*)  
Hark! we are called! I have staid too long.

SELBIZ.

Götz, give me that Iron Hand! In life old Hans has always been united to you, and in death he will not be divided from you!

BERLICHINGEN.

Away!

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT III.



## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—FOREST NEAR AUGSBURG.

*Band of Gipsies round a fire.*

GIPSY LEADER.

Hist! heard ye that cry?

SECOND GIPSY.

I heard the midnight owl—naught else.

GIPSY LEADER—(*laying his ear to the ground.*)

Footsteps upon the earth! now away—now swiftly  
hither—they come—up! we shall have booty!

MOTHER GIPSY.

We shall have none. Thou knowest not friend  
from foe. 'Tis Wolf—the storm hath driven him  
back. He went forth at sunset.

GIPSY LEADER.

Yet again that cry—what is it?

MOTHER GIPSY.

Thou dost but hear the wind that waileth through the forest. See! the giant trees are bending to the storm.

GIPSY LEADER.

It was a woman's cry!

MOTHER GIPSY.

Thou art deceived—there is no cry. Ha! Wolf hasteneth through the brake—we shall have food!

GIPSY LEADER.

Chide him—he hath staid late.

(*Enter GIPSY BOY.*)

MOTHER GIPSY.

Swarthy son—dark eyed son—comest thou at last. What dost thou bring?

GIPSY BOY.

A young hare, mother—there—and a field mouse. I am cold and wet—my blood is chilled.

MOTHER GIPSY.

Warm thee at the fire, son—the fire that burneth so brightly, and thou 'lt heed no more the breath of the storm.

## GIPSY BOY.

The breath of the storm! I heed it not. Between the rocks I mounted high, and there I found the rushing torrent and the snow;—yet still I mounted, and turned not back.

## MOTHER GIPSY.

The night is wild and dark.

## GIPSY BOY.

Then I crept down into the deep still valley—I crossed the ravine, and waded the swollen brook. The death lights glittered upon the damp and tangled bushes—yet I felt no fear, and turned not back.

## MOTHER GIPSY.

Thou hast done bravely, my son. But wherefore hast thou staid so long?

## GIPSY BOY.

The feet of horses came dashing through the valley. I fell quick upon the earth, and shouted, as thou hast taught me, till my voice was heard above the moanings of the wind. The horsemen were bewildered, and sundered from each other;—one of them is lost. Hark! he is here!

ADELHEID (*without.*)

Help, holy mother of God! I can support myself no longer—yet one more effort, and I may reach the fire which seems to glare in mockery above me.

(*Enter ADELHEID. The Gipsies start up and surround her.*)

GIPSY LEADER (*seizing her hand.*)

White Lady—beautiful Lady—thou art welcome—thrice welcome. Whither art thou wandering? Come to our hearth—come to our table. Thou shalt freely drink and eat with us——

ADELHEID.

What frightful company is this?—(*aside.*) Let me draw near the fire, I pray you—I am very cold. We have lost our way in the darkness—my horsemen ride close behind me.

GIPSY LEADER.

Come, then, and have fear of nothing. I am the leader of this poor people. We do no harm—we dwell upon the bare earth—we sleep upon the bare earth. We ask nothing from your Princes, save the withered leaves whereon we are born—whereon we die! Rest thee, white Lady, upon the hemlock

trunk beside the fire. A hard seat for thee—but there—thou hast the blanket which sheltereth me—it may prove soft even to thy tender limbs.

ADELHEID.

Keep your covering.--(*Aside.*) I am lost.

GIPSY LEADER.

Though we go naked through the storm, we shiver not—though the hungry wolves howl around us, we tremble not—though the death lights bewilder us, and at midnight the Wild Huntsman dash over us, still we fear not—we know not fear. White Lady, beautiful Lady, wherefore shrinkest thou? This hand is swarthy, but it hath no stain of blood upon it. Thou art with those who will care for thee, and keep thee well.

ADELHEID.

I doubt it not. But send me forth some of your band, to seek my servants and my horsemen. I will reward you—richly reward you.

GIPSY LEADER.

They shall be sought for. Fear not, white Lady, they have not wandered far. I go myself to seek them. (*Aside.*) Ha! shouts in the forest. I will

not lose her. Again! I must be speedy. (*To the men of the Band.*) Shroud up the fire towards the valley, and follow in the darkness. (*To Gipsy Boy.*) Let her be closely watched, but let no daring finger touch her beauty. Thou dost know me!

[*Exit with Gipsies.*

MOTHER GIPSY (*seating herself upon the hemlock.*)

Give me this bloodless hand. Look at me, white Lady, beautiful Lady—look at me well. I will unfold to thee the truth—the holy truth.

ADELHEID.

There is my hand.

MOTHER GIPSY.

Thou comest from the Court—thou goest to the Court. Princes and Lords honour thee and love thee. White Lady—beautiful Lady—I speak the truth—the holy truth.

ADELHEID.

You speak no lie.

MOTHER GIPSY.

Three lovers on this hand. The first thou hadst—the second thou hast—the third thou wilt have—

yet beware—he will destroy thee! White Lady—beautiful Lady—I speak the truth—the holy truth.

ADELHEID.

God forbid!

MOTHER GIPSY.

Children! children! fair children on this hand—like the mother—like the father—noble, fair! White Lady, beautiful Lady, I speak the truth—the holy truth.

ADELHEID.

This time your art has failed—I have no children.

MOTHER GIPSY.

Children, fair children on this hand—with the last, the fondest lover. White Lady, beautiful Lady, I speak the truth—the holy truth. Fierce foes upon this bloodless hand—fierce foes beset thee. One standeth ever in thy path, and now he doth possess thee. White Lady, beautiful Lady, I speak the truth—the holy truth.

ADELHEID.

Go on——what of my foes?

*(Gipsy Boy suddenly seats himself upon the hemlock. Adelheid draws back.)*



MOTHER GIPSY.

That is my son. Look at him, white Lady! Hair like the wild thornbush—eyes like the glittering death-lights. My soul delighteth in him. His teeth like ivory—when I bare him, I wept not. I laid him on my bosom, and he hath grown there strong and beautiful. How fond and fierce he gazeth at thee! White Lady, thou dost please him.

ADELHEID.

Bid him begone!

MOTHER GIPSY.

He will not harm thee. With women, fair like thee, he is gentle as a young and playful deer. I have taught him all my art. The water, it cannot drown him—the fire, it cannot burn him—the steel, it cannot slay him. Look at him, white Lady—see, thou dost please him! Draw back thy hand, my son, she is affrighted. Give us to buy bread, white Lady, we are poor—give us to buy bread!

ADELHEID.

There is a casket filled with gold. (*She attempts to rise from the hemlock. Gipsy Boy grasps her nearer.*)

## MOTHER GIPSY.

We would not rob thee—we are not robbers. Give us one piece of all this shining treasure for the truth we have unfolded to thee—the holy truth.

## ADELHEID.

Take what you will—but bid your son begone.

## MOTHER GIPSY.

He will not harm thee. I will teach thee something more. Fierce foes are on this bloodless hand—fierce foes beset thee—one standeth even in thy path, and now he doth possess thee. Take this—my hand hath given it fearful power—there in thy bosom. Cast it in flowing water. The water will not change, yet he who drinketh must slowly waste and die—must slowly waste and die!

## ADELHEID.

(*Aside.*) I shudder. (*Gipsy boy presses her in his arms—she struggles.*) For the love of God unloose your hold!

GIPSY BOY (*kissing her lips.*)

Thou art beautiful!

[*Adelheid shrieks.*]

*(Enter FRANZ, with servants and soldiers.)*

FRANZ *(rushing forward.)*

'Tis she! 'Tis she!

ADELHEID *(sinking in his arms.)*

Franz! welcome——Franz——dear Franz!

FRANZ.

Best, dearest Lady! Fear nothing—you are safe. These wandering beggars—have they done aught that should be punished?

ADELHEID.

Nothing—their only fault was over kindness. Yon swarthy boy—ha! he is fled. His mother wrings her hands there—so let it pass—it was not much. I thought you surely followed, when my horse started from the beaten path!

FRANZ.

I followed close—but, at my approach, the more affrighted, he dashed wildly on, and left us all bewildered in the darkness. Then, of a sudden, we heard your voice above the storm, calling for help, upon our left. We swiftly turned to seek you, but scarce had we gone a step, when the whole valley

echoed with strange, unearthly cries, which seemed like yours! Perplexed and terrified, we hurried to and fro, like men possessed, till at the last, baffled and hopeless, we halted on the border of the forest, and gave you up for lost.

ADELHEID.

What men-at-arms are those?

FRANZ.

I plunged alone into the forest, and wandered I knew not whither, till my desperate shouts were answered by these men-at-arms, who from the adverse quarter were advancing towards this gipsy fire. Its light was hidden from us in the valley; and eagerly believing that we should find you here, I hastened back with trembling speed to rally my companions. We were not disappointed. But, dearest Lady, look at those soldiers once again--their armour should not be unknown to you.

ADELHEID.

By this feeble, wavering light I do not know them.

FRANZ.

They are a remnant of Werdenhagen's scattered

troops. Berlichingen has defeated the detachment which marched so boldly forth to overwhelm him!

ADELHEID.

Count Werdenhagen's troops defeated! It cannot be—I will not believe it. He outnumbered thrice the rabble of that iron handed ruffian.

FRANZ.

Speak, then, dear Lady, with the wearied soldiers there. I know them well—they were a part of the Imperial Guard. Scarce fifty of the whole detachment have escaped. The Count himself is made a prisoner. Will you not speak with them.

ADELHEID.

No—I have no wish to hear their sorry story. Let us at once away for Augsburg. My Lord required my presence in more fitting time than he imagined. Away, dear Franz! I owe a debt to Götz von Berlichingen, which shall be cancelled soon, or all that I have won must prove deceit and mockery!

FRANZ.

The storm still rages, dearest Lady. You are too faint and weary, so soon again to meet it. Rest here, in this poor shelter, but till daybreak.

## ADELHEID.

At daybreak we must be in Augsburg. Nay, were the storm a tempest it should not hinder me. My horse cannot be far below—despite my weakness and alarm I staid till I secured him. Where are your own?

## FRANZ.

They wait for us at the forest's edge. (*Mother Gipsy approaches, and signs Franz to withdraw.*) What means the hag?

## ADELHEID.

Unfold my pages fortune—he is the truest of my friends.

## MOTHER GIPSY.

White Lady, 'tis woven with thine own! (*FRANZ starts.*) I have no need to look upon his hand. Smile not, ere long thou'lt prove it. Thou hastenest forth to meet thy fiercest foes—they will encompass thee on every side. Remember what I gave thee. So soon forgotten—'tis in thy bosom. Ha! hast thou found it? Now, away at once—the time has come. Heed not the darkness nor the storm—ride on—delay may ruin thee.

ADELHEID.

Take this gold—you will not have it? Then give it to your son—the boy who sat beside me on the hemlock.

GIPSY MOTHER.

Thou hast escaped a greater peril with him that's gone. Forget his boldness and away!

ADELHEID.

Give him the gold! Now, Franz, once more to meet the storm. [*Exeunt.*

---

SCENE II.—SALOON AT JAXTHAUSEN.

MARIE (*alone.*)

At last I am alone. They have left me for a moment, and now I fain would shun the thoughts which wildly crowd upon me. There is no other way. My brother has been hurried headlong on to ruin, without one friendly hand stretched forth to save or even to warn him. I cannot be deceived;—alone, he must perish, and perish too proscribed—a bandit



and an outlaw! And will Sickingen's alliance so surely change his desperate affairs? Why do I shrink or pause—it is too late! An hour hence—hark! the music sounds faintly from the chapel—'tis illuminated! The court yard is lined with soldiers—their armour glitters in the torch light—fitting guests at my ill-fated bridal! To-night! let me not think! What have I done? What crime am I to expiate by such misery? Am I not stained with hidden guilt? Alas! I know not what I say—I am not guilty. Safe in this solitude from the licentious tumult of the world—obscure, unknown, how innocent, how peacefully my young existence glided on. Weislingen, where art thou now? Sunken in vice—the supple agent of a tyrant; once my betrothed, and now—yet I upbraid thee not. Thy friend thou hast betrayed—basely betrayed thy friend. For me, it matters little—'twill soon be over! (*Trumpet sounds in the distance.*) What strange and mournful blast is that? It seems a distant trumpet which swells over the bridal music—a lonely funeral dirge! Again it sounds, and nearer? Some one approaches. 'Tis my brother and his wife, and—and Sickingen himself! I must away. Yet, a few more moments—and I shall be calm and silent!

[*Exit.*

## SCENE III.—COURT-YARD AT JAXTHAUSEN.

*File of Soldiers, with banners and torches. In the back ground a Chapel.*

FAUD, PETER, GEORGE.

GEORGE.

'Tis merry that we are assembled here as wedding guests. We soon shall be in other company.

FAUD.

Better for me. Our banners hang there dull and sleepy. How long before they'll wave above the castle gates?

GEORGE.

Not long. If Sickingen would give our foes the slip, he must not linger in the chapel. The saucy kerl who brought old Blinzkopf's summons, reported them a league behind—no more.

PETER.

I understand not this affair with Sickingen. He weds the sister of our noble Lord—yet at the

moment of our utmost need makes haste to turn his back! He will not even spare the men he sent when the fool-hardy Werdenhagen came against us, whom we could well have beaten back alone. Now we must fight at heavy odds.

FAUD.

Courage, old Camerad! Think you that Götz von Berlichingen knows not the game he plays? For what was this alliance with Franz Sickingen? Shall we be long beleaguered by these braggart foes, when at his will he may surprise their open camp? Let him away with the Lady Marie—we shall hear the sooner from his men-at-arms.

PETER.

Has he so promised?

GEORGE.

Give way—the bridal train approaches!

*(Music. Enter male and female servants of the household. A Priest. BERLICHINGEN with MARIE —SICKINGEN with ELISABETH. They cross the Court-yard and enter the Chapel. The Soldiers salute the train with their pikes and banners. The music ceases.)*

PETER.

A joyless company! The Lady Marie looks a pale and mournful bride. Saw you not how she paused and shuddered at the chapel door?

GEORGE.

Young maidens ne'er are merry when they wed. The danger, too, around us, is cause enough to make her sad even on the bridal night. (*Aside.*) She still remembers Weislingen. If Heaven be just he will not be forgotten there!

FAUD.

Our scout stays late. He should have brought us news ere this. The night is growing dark—it would be well to man the walls.

GEORGE.

You are in haste, old Faud. We have our stations all assigned, and at the word can reach them in a moment. The Iron Hand is seldom slow to strike.

FAUD.

I have no need to learn it, yunker! You were but a noisy brat when I first fought beneath these banners, which have been safely borne by this old

hand through many a bloody field. How was it that our ambush was discovered, when we waylaid the traitorous Bamberg? My counsel was not heeded, or we should not now be caged up in the castle here, with prices set upon our heads, like rebels! Had we then caught the cunning priest——

PETER (*at the chapel door.*)

They are about to leave the altar!

GEORGE.

Hark! a horse's feet! (*Drums at a distance.*)

FAUD.

The foe!—the foe! (*Drums.*) By Heaven, they are upon us! To the walls, my merry men!—Out to the walls! Give back their shouts, and strike for Berlichingen!

(*Soldiers rush from the Court-yard with shouts.*

FAUD *hastens towards the Chapel. Enter BERLICHINGEN.*)

BERLICHINGEN.

Silence this clamour! I hear the threatening drums as well as you. They are still beyond the marsh. (*Drums.*) We shall have time to spare. (*To George.*) Is Hans returned?

GEORGE.

He rode just now beneath the castle walls.

BERLICHINGEN.

Go bring his news. Be speedy—you must guide my sister and her husband, who leave the castle straight. The water side is open yet—you know the ford—once safe across, your path will not be hindered. Ride with them to Schwarzenberg, and wait there further orders from Sickingen himself.

GEORGE.

My Lord—leave you in this hour of peril?

BERLICHINGEN.

You will soon return—go—let me have Hans' report. [*Exit* GEORGE.]

FAUD (*aside to Peter.*)

You heard?

PETER.

I did.

BERLICHINGEN.

What! fierce old trumpeter, are you lingering there? Away with your Camerad to man the walls. (*Drums at a distance, and shouts of the soldiers.*)

Quick—silence that shouting! Keep all still as the grave, and let no shot be fired till I myself shall give the word. [*Exit FAUD with PETER.*] So—the surly Blinzkopf thinks his conquest sure—he heralds his advance with rattling drums—yet is he sooner than I thought. Well, let him come—the odds may not turn out so fearful. Now for the newly wedded pair.

(*Enter SICKINGEN, MARIE, ELISABETH, and servants from the chapel. MARIE leans upon ELISABETH.*)

SICKINGEN (*aside to BERLICHINGEN.*)

Are we surprised?

BERLICHINGEN.

No—your path is open yet. (*Embracing MARIE.*) God's blessing be upon you, my true and gentle sister! A brother's love has watched over you from your earliest days, and now must it yield to one which is more near. Kiss me, dear child! Our parting should not be so full of grief! Carl waits at your new home to give you merry welcome. I sent him hence with Hans at sunset, that he might be safe from every danger. Speak to me, sister—Marie, I like not this silence!



SICKINGEN.

I pray you let her tears have course.

MARIE.

I know they are in vain—so will I shed no more. Have you done well, my brother, to conceal from me how fearfully you are beset? Was it fitting that my bridal vows should be pronounced in an hour like this? We part from you, that we may send you succour—the only hope in your extremity—and will it not come too late? (*Drums nearer.*) They now are at the castle gates—I will not thus abandon you!

(*Enter GEORGE.*)

BERLICHINGEN (*aside.*)

What do you bring?

GEORGE.

The foe is stronger than we thought—two thousand at the least. They are drawing slowly round the castle—at daybreak you may expect their first assault. The water side is open, as you thought; but a detachment in advance has already crossed the marsh.

BERLICHINGEN.

Are the horses saddled?

GEORGE.

They wait at the southern gate.

BERLICHINGEN.

Be ready, then. [*Exit* GEORGE.] You heard the news?

SICKINGEN.

At day break you shall hear from me.

BERLICHINGEN.

Speak to your wife—I cannot move her.

SICKINGEN.

Dear Marie, our scout has brought us back a fair report. The enemy will make no assault till sunrise. If we set forth at once, we shall have time enough. (*Drums nearer.*) Need I say why I urge you thus to leave your brother?

MARIE.

The enemy will make their first assault at sunrise! Can we not then stay here and die together? What will avail our hurried flight? But add a few more years of bitterness and sorrow to these our weary

lives! Let me stay here, my brother—you will not drive me from you—Sickingen, haste—away without me!

SICKINGEN.

The die is cast—henceforth we part no more!

MARIE.

Sister, will you not speak? Why do you gaze at me in such dreadful silence?

ELISABETH.

My words may prove less pleasing than my silence. While you linger here, the only hope that we can cherish of deliverance, is passing from us! 'Twere better far to save the friends you love from peril and from death, than vainly weep and plunge to ruin with them. [Drums—nearer.

MARIE.

Quick! let me begone—no more delay—Sickingen give me your hand—I am very faint.

BERLICHINGEN.

One moment. (*Embracing her.*) Poor, trembling child, by God's favour we shall meet again!

ELISABETH.

She answers not——lead her away.

[*Drums nearer.*

BERLICHINGEN.

To the southern gate!

[*Exeunt.*

---

SCENE IV.—RUINS OF A CHAPEL NEAR  
SCHWARZENBERG.

*In the back ground Peasants, half armed with  
swords, pikes, and scythes.*

METZLER, SIEVERS, LINK, KOHL.

METZLER.

Whence had you this news?

KOHL.

From Link here, who is just returned. At Augsburg he saw the soldiers.

METZLER (*to LINK.*)

Made they no stand at-all?

LINK.

I know not how it was. They swore that Berlichingen fell upon them from behind, when they were halted for the night, not thinking he would venture from the castle. He fired their camp, and on the first assault they were dismayed, defeated, scattered in a shameful flight!

METZLER.

Selbiz was killed?

LINK.

He fell upon the field.

METZLER.

And Werdenhagen is a prisoner?

LINK.

With many others. But they boast that Berlichingen will soon repent this first advantage. New levies have been ordered, more numerous than before, which even now are on their hasty march against him.

[LINK and KOHL *withdraw*.

METZLER.

So, Sievers, we could not have it better. Alone and unsupported, with the Ban upon him, old Götz

will scarce sustain it long. The nobles hate him, and the thrifty burghers, griping their purses, tremble when they hear his name. Our offer, then, will come like help from heaven. So hardly pressed, he cannot stand upon his rank and knighthood, and disdain to ally himself with peasants. We once were proud of his protection—'twould be well in this last struggle for our sacred rights, to rally round him as a leader.

SIEVERS.

Count you so surely on our comrades? They have sworn to extirpate the nobles, and think you they will obey one of the fated order? They hate their very name!

METZLER.

And who has cause like mine to hate their name? Have I forgot my Brother? They cannot hinder me—by heaven, they shall not strike a blow till Berlichingen is the chosen leader of us all! They are not fools. What will avail our numbers and the justness of our cause? Our tyrants will despise us—hunt us like wolves—cut us to pieces with their trained troops—hang us from trees like rebel slaves and felons! You know it? But marshalled and

led on by one of themselves—a fearless, practised soldier—we may challenge them to open conflict—confront them face to face—not steal upon them like midnight ruffians! The Iron Hand will be a rallying word for thousands, who groan beneath their burning chains, yet dare not move to strike them off. The people so long, so fearfully oppressed, will start from their coward apathy, and learn their strength. Our cruel foes, vanquished by men whom, as their vassals, they have scorned and outraged, will be driven affrighted back to their dark holds of guilt and violence, which quickly toppling on them, Freedom shall be proclaimed throughout our Fatherland! Dare you oppose me?

SIEVERS.

What need of threats to me? You know that I have cause enough to yield full trust to Berlichingen. Have you forgotten how he righted me with Wildenholz?

METZLER.

You think my purpose fair, then?

SIEVERS.

I surely do. But how will you break the matter



to our comrades? If Link's report be true, it must be done with speed.

METZLER.

It shall be done—to-night, at our meeting in the Chapel here. (KOHL *suddenly advances.*) What seek you now?

KOHL.

Max Stumpf sends word that you are waited for. He craves your presence straight.

METZLER.

He is in haste. (*To* SIEVERS.) You shall go with me—we will prepare him for to-night. (*To* KOHL.) Keep careful watch around. Seize all who pass—let none escape. At nightfall you may expect me. Now, Sievers. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE V.—AUGSBURG.

*Weislingen's Hotel—Adelheid's Bedchamber.*

WEISLINGEN, ADELHEID.

ADELHEID.

Why was it not foreseen?

WEISLINGEN.

Foreseen! Who could foresee that Sickingen, so cold and wary, would jeopard all his fortune to save a man proclaimed a traitor to the empire? The force was strong enough to make resistance hopeless. Berlichingen, daring as he is, pretended not to cope with it. His castle was surprised and stormed—himself a prisoner—his men-at-arms dispersed or killed, and our victorious soldiers, eager in plunder and pursuit, when Sickingen fell suddenly upon them with all his power. The issue—was what you have heard. Berlichingen now is building up his shattered walls, and by this cursed alliance may, for a time, at least, defy our efforts.

ADELHEID.

And the Emperor?

## WEISLINGEN.

He is but the shadow of his former self—grown old and fearful. When we counselled instant measures to crush this spreading treason and rebellion, he answered calmly, “Let him alone—Berlichingen is no traitor. He has been harder pushed than was my purpose. While he remains in quiet at his castle, he can work no harm. He is too honest for intrigue and faction, like my chosen courtiers, and till he sally forth to cause more violence and tumult, he shall not be touched!”

## ADELHEID.

Said he naught to Sickingen’s assault upon the Imperial standard?

## WEISLINGEN.

He called him the truest of his subjects—the friend of peace and order—the valiant soldier, who in the approaching hour of peril would be sure to bring his potent aid against the common foe of Christendom. Our gracious Sovereign, borne down beneath the weight of care and years, still presses with an eager grasp the gilded sceptre, which must soon be wrested from his lifeless hands. He fears the Turks—he fears the growing power of France,

and is loth to hazard the support of any whom he may count among his friends. He will do nothing.

ADELHEID.

Are you content?

WEISLINGEN.

*Content* as you would have me. The peasants of Suabia and Franconia have broken out in open violence and rebellion—they act with concert, and their numbers are increasing fast. Berlichingen has been long their boasted champion and their idol. He dreams not that we are wasting time in feeble counsels here; and should he, to strengthen his defence, accept the succour which these rebel boors will haste to offer him, his doom is sealed! The nobles will make common cause against him—his wavering friends, who still uphold his violence, will at once desert him, and Sickingen himself will be compelled to stand and see him perish. With this, fair Lady, I am *content*.

ADELHEID.

So then we must attend the pleasure of the boors.

WEISLINGEN.

There is no choice.

ADELHEID.

Sickingen has in sooth been generous in an hour of need. He was married, as they tell me, the very night of the assault. You have not spoken of this rare marriage.

WEISLINGEN.

Wherefore should I speak of it?

ADELHEID.

'Twould seem the Lady Marie has no intent to waste her youth, and pine and languish for a recreant lover; like a gay maiden, she soon has boldly won another. Methinks your fancy must have gone astray in painting her so full of tenderness and melancholy.

WEISLINGEN.

'Tis well she has forgotten one who knew not how to prize her innocence and truth. The faith she now has plighted to her husband will be surely kept. The smiles and whispers of malignant fools will never touch his honour.

ADELHEID.

Touch they yours, Count Weislingen?

WEISLINGEN.

*Touch* they mine! The Archduke grows so heedless and so pressing, that he must purpose to make trial of my dutiful endurance.

ADELHEID.

And my deportment!

WEISLINGEN.

You are a woman—you can hate none who court your smiles.

ADELHEID.

The way to satisfy these doubts?

WEISLINGEN.

'Tis easy—quit the Court. In this time of war and violence you should retire for safety to my castle.

ADELHEID.

Whence I was summoned with such pressing haste, to calm perchance a base suspicion like that which now dishonours me! I should do well, indeed, to follow thus the beck and bidding of a jealous fancy, which has of late harassed my life, and which my weak submission has but served to aggravate!

I will not quit the Court! Nay, yet a word more. The Emperor's strength is sinking fast—'tis plain the hand of death is on him. My Lord of Bamberg and his *dependent friends*, though they so long have swayed the Imperial counsels, have failed in their intrigues against the young Archduke. The hopes and choice of all now rest upon him. He must succeed his kinsman, and then your dream of power is ended! Thwarted in every plan, when you had thought success within your grasp—dreading the future—hating the past—stung with remorse, and wanting all manly fortitude, you poorly turn and vent your bitterness on me, because forsooth I am compelled to bear it! The foul aspersion which you here have cast upon me, I answer with the scorn it merits; but trust me, Weislingen, it shall not be forgotten!

## WEISLINGEN.

Adelheid, no more! The bell is tolling for the Council, the last to which I may be called—my answer must be brief. To make you mine, I have plunged deep in guilt—scoffed at all truth and virtue—broken my plighted word—betrayed a generous friend, plotted against his life, and set a dark and damning stain upon my soul! Possession of



your beauty has not dulled the wild desires with which it first inflamed me. I have won you at a fearful cost, and at a cost more fearful yet I am resolved to keep you. I trust you not—you mean to play me false. I can no longer cling even to distracting doubt—you *will not quit the Court!* Now mark me well. The hour in which my jealous watch shall come upon the frailest proof of your disloyalty, will fix my desperate purpose, and cut short your subtle schemes. The guilt of such a treason will be your's alone—on you alone shall fall the punishment. No power—no device can save you. I have madly staked my life and fortune on your truth, and all shall be destroyed together! Be warned, if you would live. [*Exit.*

ADELHEID (*alone.*)

*One standeth ever in thy path, and now he doth possess thee*—the gipsy prophecy was strangely like the truth. Ha! I had forgot the gipsy remedy! Footsteps in the corridor! Who is it ventures here so boldly? 'Tis Franz, my only anchor in this storm which threatens to engulf me.

(*Enter FRANZ.*)

FRANZ (*looking around and drawing a letter from his bosom.*)

A letter, gracious Lady.

ADELHEID.

From the Archduke?

FRANZ.

From the Archduke.

ADELHEID.

He gave it you himself?

FRANZ.

He gave it me himself.

ADELHEID (*reads the letter---*FRANZ *fixes his eyes gloomily upon her face.*)

The chances seem to turn against me—I am hard beset. (*aside.*) Dear Franz, wherefore so sorrowful?

FRANZ.

I am not sorrowful.

ADELHEID.

Nay, tell me all your grief—you know how well I love you.

FRANZ.

And yet I am condemned to pass the weary hours in vain and lingering hope! 'Twere better I should die at once!

ADELHEID.

Inconstant boy! It is not long since you found happiness enough in being near me. Why are you thus ungrateful? Must you have golden earnest to secure your love and truth?

FRANZ.

My God! there is no drop of blood in these my throbbing veins I would not freely shed to prove my blind devotion to your will! I have no thought, no sense, but for my maddening passion—no fear—no joy that is not twined about your image. And thus I am rewarded!

ADELHEID.

Dear Franz, upbraid me not—my words were hasty—I meant not to wound you.

FRANZ (*bursting into tears.*)

The Archduke, Lady Adelheid, the young Archduke. You fan the flame which must full soon destroy me, that I may lead you to his hateful arms!

ADELHEID.

Franz! do you forget to whom you speak?

FRANZ (*seizing the letter and stamping upon it with his feet.*)

I can endure no more—I will no longer play the pandering miscreant!

ADELHEID.

Franz, you are mad!

FRANZ.

To compel me, with such double treachery, thus to sacrifice my noble Lord!

ADELHEID.

Begone, weak changeling! Go and betray my secret to your *noble Lord*. I was a fool to count upon your truth, and yield myself so blindly to your power. Go and betray me!

FRANZ.

Betray you! I said not that—I meant not that. (*Falling at her feet.*) Forgive me, dearest Lady—my senses are bewildered—I know not what I say.

ADELHEID (*raising him with both hands, and drawing him gently towards her.*)

Dear, warm-hearted boy!

FRANZ (*starts up, and presses her in his arms.*)

God in heaven!

ADELHEID.

Leave me—the walls are traitors. Leave me, dear Franz—some one approaches! We shall be seen! (*Breaking from him.*) Change not in your love, and a fair reward shall soon be yours! [*Exit.*

FRANZ (*alone.*)

*A fair reward shall soon be yours!* But, till that hour let me live. My father's gray hairs should not save him, dared he to stand now in my path, and warn me back! [*Exit.*

END OF ACT FOURTH.

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—SCHWARZENBERG.

*The rebel Peasants are sacking the town. Men, women and children are flying in different directions. In the distance Schwarzenberg Castle is seen burning.*

OLD MAN.

To the forest, to the forest for your lives! The blood hounds are close upon us!

WOMAN.

Holy God! the flames mount up to heaven! The smoke blackens the setting sun!

OLD MAN.

Linger not to look back. (*Shouts.*) Hark! they come! Woe is me, my palsied limbs sink down beneath me. I must stay here and die.

WOMAN.

Nay, lean on me. We have but to reach the

brow of yonder hill (*Shouts—nearer.*) One effort more—away!

(*Enter LINK, SIEVERS, KOHL, and armed Peasants.*)

LINK.

The place is ours! Spare none. Kill those who fight and those who fly. Plunder the town throughout, and then set faggots to the doors, and let the flames destroy what we have left!

[*Exeunt KOHL and Peasants, with shouts.*]

SIEVERS.

Are these the orders Metzler gave you?

LINK.

They are my own. Metzler led on the assault against the castle. You see it burning there—a fiery signal, which we must haste to answer.

SIEVERS.

My God! the oath is broken then we swore to Berlichingen!

LINK.

I swore no oath to him. Let the old Iron Hand rue his bargain! He has given us the start for which we chose him. What need we care for oaths? We



can fight our way without him. (*Shouts.*) Ha! here is Metzler with his chosen band. Now, you shall hear what are *his* orders!

(*Enter METZLER, with Peasants.*)

METZLER.

I have Otto von Schwarzenberg!

LINK.

Count Schwarzenberg! He left the castle at day-break. You have him not.

METZLER.

I have Otto von Schwarzenberg! My brother he condemned to die a dreadful death—*famine—famine—and despair!* I have him now.

SIEVERS.

You will not slay him?

METZLER.

When yonder sun, which sinks behind that cloud of smoke and fire, shall come again to wake the sleeping earth, its early rays shall fall upon one scene of woe and desolation, and the murderer's soul shall be—where mercy cannot find it!

SIEVERS.

You swore with me to shed no blood, save in the open field. And dare you——

METZLER.

Old man, stand not between me and my vengeance! I have a vow in heaven more sacred than my oath to Berlichingen. Otto von Schwarzenberg seized my wretched brother, and thrust him bound with chains into the dungeons of his castle, because to feed the hunger of his famished children, he slew a wandering deer within the limits of the forest! We all came and cried for mercy. I knelt before the tyrant—clasped his knees, and prayed him by the love of God to spare my only brother! He stood, the monster, like a fiend of hell, and mocked our anguish and our tears! He dashed his iron glove into my suppliant face, and while my blood poured from the ghastly wound, he fiercely shouted forth—“Hence, begone base hinds! I brook your insolence no longer. In that dungeon shall the robber die a living death—*despair and famine shall consume him*. I swear it by this sword!” Then was there no more a God in heaven for me, and now shall there be none for him!

SIEVERS.

Have mercy.

METZLER.

Mercy! name not the word! My brother's dungeon was even with the ground. I came by night, and laid my ear upon the damp and rugged wall. I heard him groan and cry, and clash his heavy chains, and vainly call on God to save him! I answered, but he heard me not. Five nights I came, and as I marked his cries grew fainter, with my bleeding hands I madly tore the sharp and senseless stones, and gnashed upon them with my teeth! The sixth, I heard no more--no groan--no cry--no clashing of his chains. I listened in the silent night to hear my brother's groans, as a young maiden listens from her casement for the gentle whispers of her lover.-- But I heard no more--death was still! Then I fell upon the earth, and called down curses--hot, damning curses on the whole murderous race. I raised my hands to heaven and swore to give my soul no rest, till in the hour that Otto von Schwarzenberg should kneel to me, and pray for mercy, as I had knelt and prayed to him. That hour has come!

(*Enter KOHL.*)

KOHL.

The town is fired! No place holds out against us. Schwarzenberg will be soon a smoking ruin!

METZLER.

Down with it in the dust! Let the cursed name no more be heard upon the earth! (*wresting a pike from one of the peasants.*) Now for the murderer! Stand back ye hounds—away, burn and destroy! This work is mine alone. No hand but mine shall do this deed—no eye but mine shall see his dying struggles. My vengeance shall be full, and alone will I enjoy it! [Exeunt.

---

SCENE II.—ADELHEID'S CASTLE.

*Night.—Adelheid's Bedchamber.*

ADELHEID, FRANZ.

ADELHEID.

Still—listen! Silence reigns throughout. Sleep hath cast her leaden mantle over all. The light is

waning in the watch-tower. Now, away, dear Franz—to horse, away, away!

FRANZ.

Oh! let me linger. Let me thus wind my arms about thee. Canst thou now drive me from thee—forth from the light which beameth round thee into the dull and gloomy night—the unfriendly darkness?

ADELHEID (*opening the casement.*)

Darkness is not without. The pale moon is high. Bright as the day, I see the path that leads down from the castle gate. The mossy rocks are sleeping in the moonlight, and the distant mountains seem silvered with the beams of heaven. Away! through the still and lovely night—to the deed which is now before thee!

FRANZ.

So soon, I cannot leave thee. Let me stay here, where dwells my life. Alas! without is fear and death!

ADELHEID.

Quick, stripling, softly away! Dost thou still linger? How! are thy desires withered? Is thy oath—thy purpose grown a burthen to thee?

FRANZ.

Not looks—not words like these.

ADELHEID.

Where hast thou the Gipsy flask? Thou wilt again betray me. Here! I will have it back!

FRANZ.

Betray thee!

ADELHEID.

Give back the flask. Thou art a boy—a weak—a wavering boy!

FRANZ.

*Again* betray thee, saidst thou?

ADELHEID.

Since thou art bold enough to seek the love of woman, thou shouldst be taught what must be given in pledge to win it. Life, honour, virtue, peace—are they aught to thee? Leave me, thou lovest me not!

FRANZ.

I will not leave thee.

ADELHEID.

Are those moments gone in which thou didst

believe me wholly thine? When no dark shade was mingled with the transport of our love? Dear Franz, are doubt and fear so soon returned—am I not thine?

FRANZ.

Yes, thou art *mine*! And when I free thee from this threatening death, I free thee for myself. Let me away. Now is my purpose settled. Here is the flask—with steady hand will I pour this fearful poison in his cup!

ADELHEID.

Still! speak it not out!

FRANZ.

Wherefore should I fear? My ears shall hear that which my soul is now resolved to do. When he drinks, I will not turn away—I will not shudder. Even in his agony will I calmly stand, and gaze upon him. There was but one reward in all the earth for such a deed, and that reward is mine!

ADELHEID.

Away!

FRANZ.

Farewell! (*Embracing her.*) A spell is laid upon me. I cannot stir!



## ADELHEID.

Delay another moment, and thou wilt come too late!

FRANZ (*suddenly breaking from her.*)

Ha! that word no more! I will not come too late. (*Again embracing her.*) Farewell—perchance we part forever! [*Exit.*

ADELHEID (*alone.*)

Unhappy boy! still dost thou toy and trifle, and sport upon the waves which in their fury soon must overwhelm thee. There is no hope for thee! Hark! he is already on his way—his horse's hoofs are ringing through the court-yard. (*At the casement.*) With what speed he hastens on his fatal errand! The moon shines brightly in the heaven, as if to light the path before him. Now he halts and waves his hand—and now is he lost among the rocks that overhang the valley. He is beyond recall! Weislingen, scarce hast thou signed the death-warrant of thy ancient friend, before thine own is sped against thee! There seems strange justice in the deed.—How calm, how beautiful is the night! Deep, holy silence broods like a spirit over this lonely, tranquil hour, which should bring love and peace to

all who watch. And yet for me—let me to sleep, if that my weary eyes shall e'er again be closed. I cannot long endure these wild and wasting passions. And where shall I turn for rest? But to oblivion—darkness—death! [*Exit.*

---

## SCENE III.—SALOON AT JAXTHAUSEN.

ELISABETH, FAUD.

FAUD.

God save you in this hour of misery! The Lady Marie is arrived.

ELISABETH.

She cannot save him.

FAUD.

She can, and will.

ELISABETH.

Is he not joined with base-born rebels? Thrust into a common prison with ruffians and with murderers, at whose head he madly stood, as if he were

a traitor to his Order and his Sovereign? His gray hairs must come down dishonoured to the grave!

FAUD.

That bloodhound, Metzler, broke his solemn compact. My noble Lord cannot be made to answer for his atrocious deeds. The Commission found no proof against him.

ELISABETH.

Wherefore is he condemned to die?

FAUD.

Because his bitterest enemies sat in judgment on him. But trust me, gracious Lady, he will be saved. The Emperor has good cause to love the house of Berlichingen, and think you that Count Weislingen will refuse the suit of Lady Marie? Metzler and his hellish band have met their doom. The Imperial Council have no need of further vengeance—they think not of it. Your kinsman, Sickingen, had scarcely asked before they gave me liberty and sent me hither to bring you free permission of admittance to your husband's prison. Come—cast aside your grief. Speak with the Lady Marie. Despatch her on her pious errand, and then may we haste with hope and comfort to my Lord.

ELISABETH.

Alas! old man, what comfort can we bring him? His goodly heritage is plundered by insulting foes—his father's house is made a garrison of hostile soldiers—his men-at-arms are killed or prisoners—his faithful George, whom he loved next his son, is dead, and he himself condemned and infamous, covered with wounds, worn out with grief and suffering, is waiting, like a felon, for the headsman's axe to end his life and woes together! The misery is too great—you feel it not as I do.

FAUD.

Have trust in God.

ELISABETH.

His hand is heavy on us. I cannot pray for mercy.

FAUD.

Nay, you do not well, thus to refuse my counsel. My Lord will fear I have deserted him. I can delay no longer.

ELISABETH.

Where is my sister?

FAUD.

In the hall below.

ELISABETH.

Lead me to her.

[*Exeunt.*]

---

SCENE IV.—CHAMBER IN WEISLINGEN'S CASTLE.WEISLINGEN (*alone.*)

In vain I drag my restless limbs from room to room. I bear this aching torment ever with me! A burning fever rages in my blood. All my bones seem hollow—their very marrow scorched and withered! Let me sit here and court a moment's respite from a misery which ere long must end me. (*Seating himself, and then starting up.*) No rest, day nor night. In broken slumbers—frightful dreams. Darkness and sleep bring terror to my soul. I start and wake, and cry to heaven for mercy—where there is none! We have no power upon our wills. Spirits of Evil sway us at their pleasure, and deride our agony when we are driven to ruin and despair. Faint—faint! The fever's gone!

My hands are cold—the room is swimming round me! It must be——

*(Enter FRANZ, hastily.)*

FRANZ.

My Lord—great heaven, he faints! So soon—I was betrayed, then! Speak, my Lord. 'Tis Franz—your faithful—the traitor, Franz. 'Tis your murderer calls you! But open those dying eyes, and I will tell you all! He revives, and grasps my hand. Are you better, my Lord?

WEISLINGEN.

Yes, strangely better. Give me your hand, and let me walk awhile. So—I shall now do well. What was it brought you here so opportunely?

FRANZ.

A lady, with a single servant, is at the castle gate, and craves to speak with you.

WEISLINGEN.

I am too ill—I cannot see her.

FRANZ.

Her business, as she says, is urgent. She entreats your favour but for a moment.

WEISLINGEN.

A lady, said you? Do you not know her?

FRANZ.

She is closely veiled, and seems oppressed with sorrow.

WEISLINGEN.

Admit her then. Be near at hand—my illness may return upon me. (*Exit Franz.*) 'Tis doubtless a petition for the life of some one of the rebels—I should do well to lean to mercy—for in this very hour may I have fearful need of it! Dim, ghastly forms are gathered round, and point their spectral fingers to the grave which now is surely yawning at my feet. Aye—I do fear the worst! I was the first to threaten. She spoke not—gave no sign that she had heard me—save one brief smile which flashed upon her brow, and then all was calm again. I have her answer in this mortal coldness, stealing so death-like through my curdled veins, and mounting to the feeble pulses of my heart! I know not how it is—all—all are changed about me. Even Franz, my trusted Franz, stands still and gazes at me, with earnest, mournful silence, as if he held some fatal secret in his bosom. The mystery must be resolved—while there is time.



(*Enter FRANZ with MARIE veiled.*)

MARIE, (*unveiling.*)

Weislingen, I am here to ask my brother's life—to *beg* it at your hands! He is innocent, though taken with the guilty. Nay—none so well as you can know his innocence!

FRANZ, (*aside.*)

The lady Marie! Fool, idiot, that I knew her not! He turns his eyes upon me—my cup is full!

WEISLINGEN.

Speak no more, Marie—let me not hear that voice again!

MARIE.

And shall my brother die? Weislingen, 'tis strange indeed, that I have need to tell you he is innocent—that I must humbly supplicate to turn you from the foul murder of a friend, who would have given his life to save you! Are you the Adelbert whom once I loved?

WEISLINGEN.

Marie—look, the hand of death is on me—my strength is gone—I am dying here, forsaken and betrayed! Spare me the past—bring it not back

before me now! Could I but speak, your bitter scorn and hate would melt to pity and to tears! Oh! Marie—Marie!

MARIE.

My brother, the noble Götz von Berlichingen lies sorely wounded, chained in a dungeon—doomed to a traitor's death! You have the power to save him—a single word can give him life and freedom—yet you withhold that word from me! Weislingen, who should despair?

WEISLINGEN.

Franz! the papers from the Cabinet—the sealed papers, Franz!

MARIE (*aside.*)

His illness masters him—He sinks—he faints! I grow bewildered—

(FRANZ brings the papers. He falls at WEISLINGEN's feet, and clasps his knees. WEISLINGEN revives.)

WEISLINGEN.

Here is the Imperial warrant for your brother's death—and thus I tear it! (*writes*) And here you have my mandate for his liberty, upon his knightly word to hold himself in quiet at his castle. Take it

and away! Weep not so, dear Franz—your sorrow wounds me nearly. Weep not, faithful boy—hope is ever with the living.

FRANZ.

With you there can be none—You must die!

WEISLINGEN.

I must die!

FRANZ (*starting up.*)

Poison! poison! The Lady Adelheid—I—I was the tool! Guilt—treason! (*rushes out.*)

WEISLINGEN.

Ha! I know it now! Poisoned by my wife! Then farewell to all! (*attempts to rise,*) Comes death so soon?

MARIE (*supporting him.*)

Turn, oh turn your heart to him who will have mercy even at the latest hour! He answers not—no help is near! Spare him, Almighty Power! Let him have hope in thee, before he passes in this dreadful death!

WEISLINGEN.

Marie! still near me? Alas! why do you thus

increase my torment? Leave me—I pray you, by the love which once you bore me!—Just God! how fearful is thy vengeance! My wife—

MARIE.

Think not upon her! Lift up your soul to Heaven!

WEISLINGEN (*suddenly rising.*)

Ha! your brother! Here Marie—quick, take the papers—fly to save him! They wrung the Order from me, and now perchance are at their fatal work! Away, or he is lost! Let not his blood fall too upon my soul—'tis laden deep enough. Linger no more for me. I hear their footsteps—they come to my assistance. Away—away!

MARIE.

Holy Virgin! forsake me not! Adelbert—farewell—forever! [*Exit.*

WEISLINGEN (*sinking back.*)

And now—to die alone!

## SCENE V.—THE SECRET TRIBUNAL.

*A narrow vault with high arches, dimly lighted. The Dagger and the Cord are laid upon an Altar covered with black. The Judges stand around robed in black, and wearing masks.*

## FIRST JUDGE.

Ye Judges who are sworn upon the Dagger and the Cord to judge in secret, and to avenge in secret, like God himself, are your hearts pure before Him, whose Ministers ye are? Raise then your hands to Heaven, and cry woe—woe,—woe unto the guilty!

ALL (*raising their hands.*)

Woe—woe,—woe unto the guilty!

## FIRST JUDGE.

Let him whose soul doth meditate no crime, whose hands are free from innocent blood, come forth, and by the Dagger and the Cord accuse the guilty!

SECOND JUDGE (*advancing to the Altar and laying his hand upon the Dagger and the Cord.*)

My soul doth meditate no crime—my hands are

free from innocent blood. At thy call I have come forth, and by the Dagger and the Cord I here accuse the guilty!

FIRST JUDGE.

Whom dost thou accuse?

SECOND JUDGE.

Adelheid von Weislingen. A foul adultress, she hath doubly stained her marriage bed! Her Page she hath seduced to mingle poison in her husband's cup. He hath been wasted by a dreadful death, and now she smiles secure in wanton dalliance with her paramour! The Page hath slain himself.

FIRST JUDGE.

Who is the paramour?

SECOND JUDGE.

The Archduke Carl.

FIRST JUDGE.

Doth he know her guilt?

*(One of the Judges hastily advances.)*

SECOND JUDGE.

He knows it not.

*(The Judge who had advanced retires to his place.)*

FIRST JUDGE.

Wilt thou swear by the God of truth, that thou dost not accuse her falsely?

SECOND JUDGE.

I swear!

FIRST JUDGE.

If thou art proven perjured in thy oath, wilt thou yield up thy life unto the vengeance which awaiteth murder and adultery?

SECOND JUDGE.

I will!

*(Second Judge retires. The others come forward to the Altar and confer with each other. They then retire to their places.)*

FIRST JUDGE.

Judges of the Secret Tribunal! What is your sentence upon Adelheid von Weislingen?

ONE OF THE JUDGES.

She shall die the bitter death! By the Dagger and the Cord let her make expiation for her double guilt!

FIRST JUDGE.

Stretch forth your hands then. Cry woe unto her, and give her over to the Avenger!



ALL (*raising their hands.*)

Woe—woe—woe unto her!

FIRST JUDGE (*addressing the second.*)

Take thou the Dagger and the Cord, and swift pursue her! Let her no more offend the face of Heaven. Wherever thou shalt come upon her, down with her in the dust!—Ye Judges who are sworn upon the Dagger and the Cord to judge in secret, and to avenge in secret, like God himself, keep your hearts pure before Him whose ministers ye are.

[*Exeunt.*

---

SCENE VI.—ADELHEID'S CASTLE.

*Night.—Adelheid's Bedchamber.*

ADELHEID (*awaking.*)

Franz! Franz! Thank God 'twas but a dream! His fingers grasped my throat, and as I struggled methought his features changed to Berlichingen's,—who fiercely smote me with his Iron Hand, till I sank down—down—I know not whither? Would it were morning! My blood is chilled with strange forebodings.—Hark! a storm is raging through the night. It howls in fitful gusts about the castle walls, and

seems to wail for him, who now is surely numbered with the dead! No news from Franz—yet have I no fear that he has failed me.

*(A sound in the adjoining chamber.)*

What noise was that? 'Twas in the Court-yard—perhaps he has returned. *(At the casement.)* My fancy has misled me—I heard the wind—naught else. One cloudy veil is over all. No star is shining in the Heaven—nothing around but darkness, and the storm! My lamp is failing. This solitary gloom grows' fearful—I will no longer watch alone. *(Draws the bell violently.)* Shall they all rest in peaceful slumber, whilst I stand trembling here? *(Draws the bell again violently.)* Sleep hath bound up their ears—they cannot hear me.

*(A figure masked and robed in black, bearing the Dagger and the Cord, enters from the adjoining chamber.)*

Ha! a shadow on the wall! It moves—again! I am deceived—the dying lamp gives forth a wavering light, and that is all. Adelheid thou are not wont to yield to weakness and to fear. Be calm—no human power is near, and none can harm thee.

*(She covers her eyes with her hands. A moment after she removes them and gazes steadfastly at the opposite side of the wall.)*

Again 'tis there—a moving shadow! Now glides it forward—now swiftly backward. Fly hence false image of a heated brain! Begone! Thus will I follow—thus will I drive thee from me!

*(As she pursues the shadow, her eyes rest upon the masked figure. She shrieks aloud—then grasps the bell, and draws it with all her force. The figure disappears. Enter men and women servants, and men-at-arms with torches.)*

Lights! lights! bring torches here! Come near me all! More torches yet, till the dim night around be changed to friendly day! Ring the alarm bell—arm—arm you all! *(Alarm bell rings.)* Here—search that chamber. There is no other outlet. Seize him—chain him! Why do you stand bewildered? A vile assassin is concealed within!

*(Part of the servants hasten into the adjoining chamber.)*

Move not, you men-at-arms. Draw all your swords—clash them around me! So—now am I calm—now it is over—Nearer—stand nearer yet. Let none stir hence till the bright sun shine down upon us. It was no dream—oh God! it was no dream!

*[She faints and falls into the arms of her women.]*

## SCENE VII.—HEILBRONN.

*Gardens of the Castle.*

BERLICHINGEN, *seated*. ELISABETH, *supporting him*.

ELISABETH.

I pray you break this dreadful silence. You are no more as I have known you.

BERLICHINGEN.

Seek you old Berlichingen with the Iron Hand? He is indeed no more! His sword is broken—his lands are forfeit—his honour stained—and for his life—what is it worth to him?

ELISABETH.

It is the gift of God!

BERLICHINGEN.

He whom God hath stricken down, will never rise again! I am grown weary of man's treason and ingratitude. One by one, the things I cherished most are taken from me. I feel my hour has come.

I hoped to die upon the open field—His will be done.

ELISABETH.

Talk not of death. 'Tis yet far off.

BERLICHINGEN.

'Tis nearer than you think. Dear wife, lead me to yonder grassy mound, whence I may see the golden sun go down——

ELISABETH.

Your step was firm—now you are surely better.

BERLICHINGEN.

Almighty God! how beautiful is all beneath thy heaven—how free! The earth—the water—the trees—the flowers—lift up their voice in one bright hymn of praise to thee! Love reigneth over all. Elisabeth, soon are we to be parted from each other—in this fair world am I to dwell no more!

ELISABETH.

Our little Carl——will you not bless him?

BERLICHINGEN.

He needeth not my blessing. Bid him forget his

father's name. Sickingen will care for him, and for you all. Noble friend! I heeded not his counsel, and now——

*Enter MARIE and FAUD.*

MARIE.

My brother! oh, my brother!

BERLICHINGEN.

God be thanked! I see thy face once more. Kiss me, dear child. Weep not—my soul is calm—I go to peace.

MARIE.

You are free, my brother—free, and restored to all! Here is the Order. Weislingen——

BERLICHINGEN.

Let me not hear that traitor's name! My eyes grow dim. Old Camerad—thy hand. Say thou wilt not forsake my wife. Selbiz and George are dead—'tis time to die—we have outlived the faithful and the true. Marie, may God restore thy husband to thee, and bless thee for thy love to me. Nearer, dear wife—I cannot see thee. This is not death—

the air I breathe seems pure from heaven——Free-  
dom——freedom!

[*Dies.*

ELISABETH.

Only above——only above with thee? The earth is  
now a prison!

THE END.

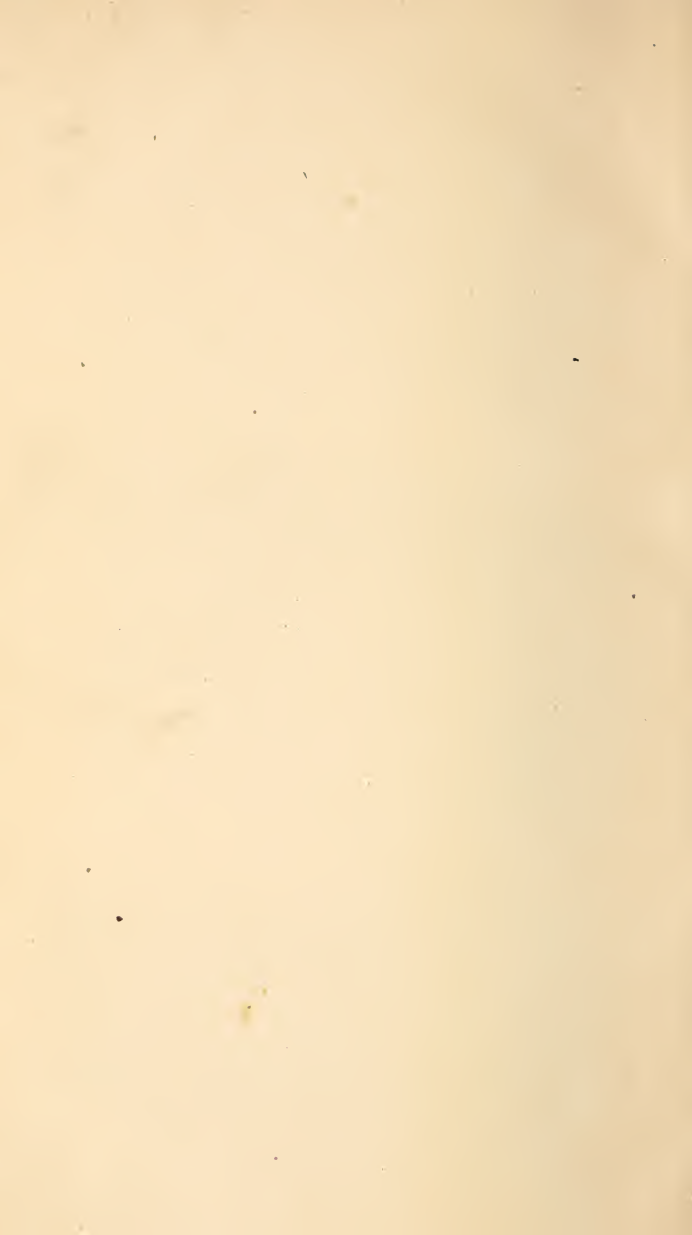


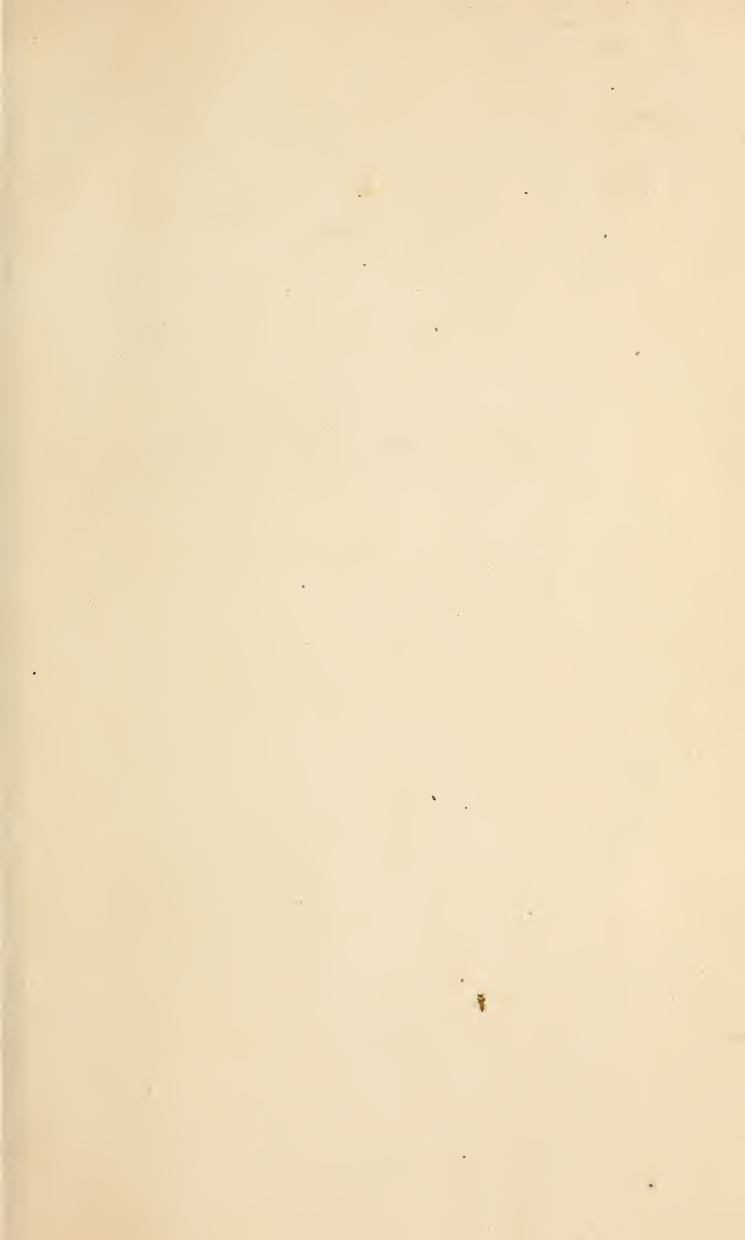


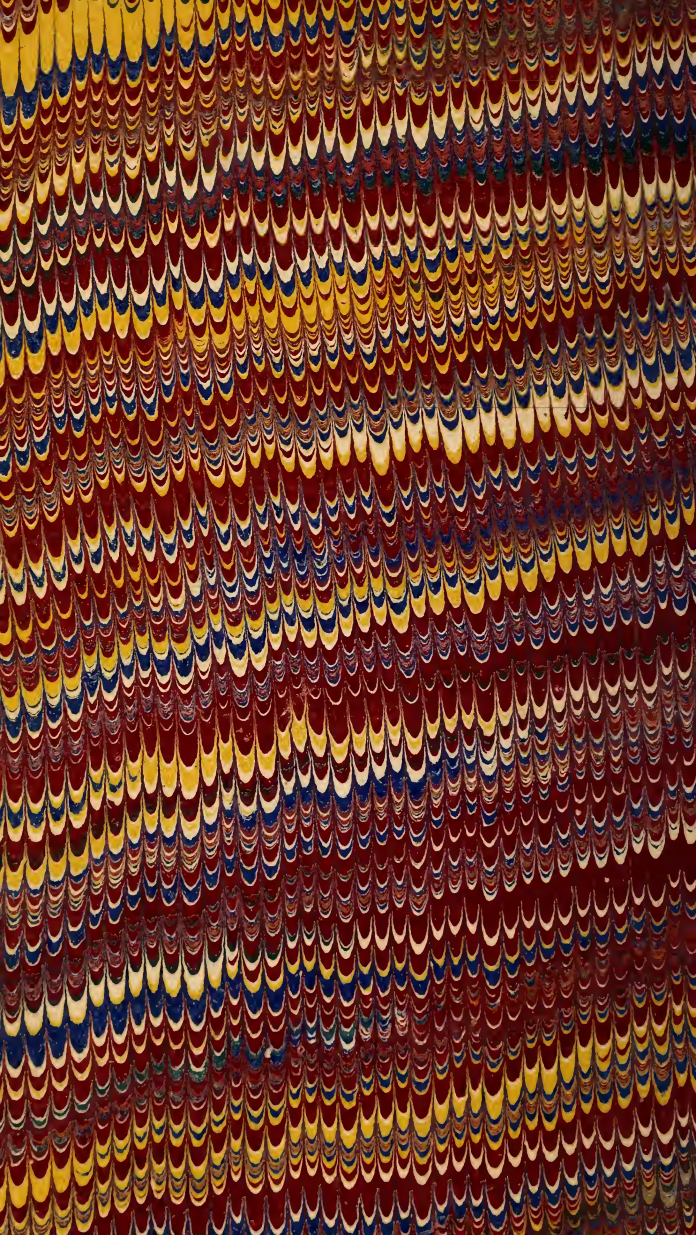








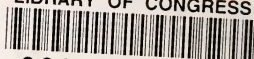








LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 561 867 A